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Waking up from Neoliberal Totality?

How We Invented a City in Which Nothing Can Be Created

Ph.D. thesis

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my original work conducted under the supervision of Doc. Paul Blokker, Ph.D. All sources used in the dissertation are indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of Charles University in Prague. The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in Czechia or overseas.

In Prague 07.06.2022   Yuliya Moskvina

Acknowledgement

Abstract

The thesis recounts the story of the Autonomous Social Center Klinika in Prague. As such, it presents an opportunity to explore the grammars of public dispute about urban space. The thesis starts with an introduction to the main theories used in studying contention—social movement studies, the theories of prefiguration and direct action, and urban movements studies. These three branches are alternated with the pragmatic sociology of critique as an ontologically, epistemologically, and methodologically novel approach to contention through the analysis of public disputes. The social actors involved in the dispute were civil servants, the Czech autonomous movement, and Prague municipal politicians. The analyzed case demonstrates the grammars used by these actors when talking about the space. The thesis tracks not only the articulated grammars but also the inner contradictions of the actors themselves as well as the tactics of and resistance to domination.

Keywords

social movement studies, prefiguration, urban movements, pragmatic sociology, squatting, public disputes

Content

Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to analyze how public disputes about urban space are constructed in today's neoliberal capitalist urban order inside the Czech Republic through the case of the Autonomous Social Center Klinika (ASC Klinika). The case study not only tells the story of the social center itself but also sheds light on the nature of disputes about urban space as well as domination and resistance in the post-socialist Czech society. The three chief actors who participated in the analyzed public dispute were civil servants, municipal politicians, and the autonomous movement itself. The thesis explores several dimensions in the public disputes. For starters, there are the public justifications the social actors use to account for the particular urban forms they consider just and appropriate. These public justifications do not appear in vacuum, they arise out of the current society and the considerations for justice present in it. Thus, the thesis has a wider scope: while exploring the dispute, it actually dives into the orders of justice present in the state, the autonomous movement, and municipal politics. Furthermore, this exploration of orders of justice brings to light internal contradictions present in the logics through which the mentioned social actors function. These include contradictions found between the justice requirements the state must fulfil in order to legitimize itself and its internal functioning, between urban meanings articulated publicly and those inside the movement, and between different visions of politics and civil society present on the municipal level. This exploration of different justificatory logics cannot be performed without examining the tactics of domination and resistance to domination. Finally, besides the public justification, the thesis explores the internal dimensions of how these social actors function—their strategies and everyday life in relation to urban space. Through this, the thesis contributes to the knowledge about (urban) social movements, raises questions about possible urban change, and expands the area in which pragmatic sociology can be applied.

The first theoretical chapter of the thesis starts with a brief discussion on the civil sphere in post-socialist Czech Republic. It is looks into three fields that explore activism: social movement studies; the analysis of prefiguration and direct action, which does not fit the canon of social movement studies; and urban movement studies. I take a critical stand towards all three approaches mainly because they ignore the agency of actors outside the social movement and fail to pay attention to the logic of their actions. In other words, it is not clear why one actor appears to be a structure and another to have agency. Instead of using these theories, I use the pragmatic sociology of critique which I explore ontologically, epistemologically, and

methodologically in the second chapter of the thesis. This approach follows thinking that conceives of social reality as an organized ecology where different actors have agency and social change happens through inputs from them all (Nunes 2021). In more concrete terms, pragmatic sociology sees social reality as radically uncertain and as such needs to be justified in different ways by different actors, actors with the same degree of agency (or possibility to act). It further considers the different nature of realities in which social action appears. On the epistemological level, pragmatic sociology works with the notion of tests that are used by both (radically) critical and institutional actors. Finally, on the methodological level, it uses an analysis of public disputes, which I have applied in this work.

The third chapter is dedicated to empirical research based on an analysis of twenty-five interviews with civil servants, activists, and municipal politicians (24 collected by me, 1 from the media, for the description see Appendix) and texts these actors produced throughout the course of the debate and beyond (including press releases, webpages, Facebook pages, and media articles). I included a wide range of data in the analysis so as to have a larger scope and to understand the justificatory logics and their changes over time, as well as a picture of the actors' internal functioning and inner conflicts. In the conclusion, I emphasize the contribution to current activism studies and the analytical benefits of pragmatic sociology in comparison to the three approaches described in the first chapter.

In the conclusion I come back to the name of this thesis. While the analysis of a neoliberal urban order is not the main focus of the thesis per se, it still presents a social, political, and economic frame for the analyzed case and the reality we live with in the majority of today's cities. By neoliberalism here I mean a domination of market logic over all other logics ("market fundamentalism"; Peck, Theodore, and Brenner 2013: passim), domination of private property rights and profit over all other rights, and protection of capitalist class interests at the expense of working class standards of living (Harvey 2013). I define the neoliberal urban order here based on Margit Mayer's work (2016). She states that urban neoliberalism must be understood as a territory-specific process during which the locus of urban politics has moved from local governments and bureaucrats to the operational sphere of the market, which seeks the valorization of real estate and public space. Peck, Theodore, and Brenner define the process of neoliberalization in a similar vein, as a process or market-oriented regulatory restructuring where state-authorized market transformation pushes endlessly for marketization and privatization, knowing no limits and never producing an equilibrium (2013). Mayer continues with the description by stating that neoliberal urbanism puts growth first: it accelerates

investment flows into the city and improves this position through inter-urban rivalry. Cities adopt entrepreneurial forms of government, making use of business models and privatized forms of governance (out-contracting, project-driven initiatives, e.g., "science cities," competition for mega-events, entrepreneurial strategies lacking transparency). Privatization is growing—every asset is being financialized, public infrastructure and services are turned into options for capital "accumulation by dispossession"—David Harvey's term meaning the appropriation of surplus value via commodification and land privatization. And finally, there are new tactics of displacement and residential shifts being applied (e.g., former impoverished neighborhoods become locations for urban spectacles, which is not a direct displacement but a milder process that still causes changes in the population—the lower class being substituted with more well-off citizens. The present thesis situates public disputes about urban space within the process of urban neoliberalization. It states that while there are some indications of understanding as regards the drawbacks to the neoliberalization process of the last thirty years, there are constraints that render impossible the possibility for actors to create a city, with the exception of those considered to be the only stakeholder with a qualification to build—developers.

The thesis brings an innovation in thinking about urban social movements by analyzing a wider range of actors and exposing the logics upon which their actions are based. The social movement here appears as an actor in the context of other actors, situated within networks of domination and resistance as well as in conflicts between orders of justice, justifications, and tests—it is not only the movement that moves, but the whole society at once. The topic of space is especially important when we consider the direction of this social movement. This is due to its' extreme importance to the capitalist order. Urban space, which became a major domain of investment and profit-making, also became a major site of anti-capitalist struggle. The Paris Commune, rent strikes in Leeds and Glasgow, autonomous movements in Europe, and other insurrections were and are the ultimate tests of the capitalist reality as regards emancipation—a radical critique without which the world becomes a totality (Boltanski 2011)

1. Social movements, prefiguration, and urban activism in the Czech Republic

The dispute over urban space as it concerns the Klinika social center in Prague might be explored through three directions of research on resistance and collective action that are

interconnected with each other: social movements studies, the analysis of prefigurative politics and politics of the act, and urban movement studies. This chapter explores these three directions separately, mainly through a discussion of research from Czech scientists, but foreign sources are also included. The chapter starts with a brief excursus to main research finding on post-socialist Czech civil society and the developments of social and urban movements in the country. In particular, the first discusses features such as the "organized" nature of the country's civil society, the distancing of civil society organizations (CSOs) from the citizenry in terms of covered topics, and the changes to issues articulated by protesters as caused by the dynamic and fluid economic and political conditions of capitalism. The following section explores social movement studies (SMS)—a prominent theoretical framework for studying social unrest in the Czech context. In this section, I pay special attention to radical activism and to the way it is conceptualized by SMS. In the third section, I discuss prefiguration and the politics of the act. The chapter continues with a section on urban movements in the Czech Republic and, more specifically, radical urban movements and political squatting. At the end of the chapter, I propose a critical reassessment of the three approaches, identifying a gap in the current state of knowledge.

1. 1. The Czech post-socialist context

Before discussing social movements and particularly radical urban movements, it is worth speaking about the nature of Czech political culture and civil society in order to understand in which social conditions these movements are situated (and simultaneously, what are the means for their analysis). In this research I consider the notion of *weak* civil societies in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE; see Howard 2003; Newton and Montero 2007) outdated and surpassed by scholars in the Czech context (for a summary of the debate about weak civil society in CEE countries, see Císař 2012). Firstly, Czech sociological research emphasizes that the Czech civil sphere is based on "professionalized advocacy non-governmental organizations" (Císař 2013a: 139) without mass participation. Thus, I look at the specificity of an *organized* civil society (versus a civil society based on individual participation) (Císař 2013b: 79) and at its political culture, particularly the gap between CSOs and citizens and between political parties and movements in terms of issues. The second notion follows from the first and considers the level of individual participation in the Czech civil sphere. As Navrátil (2013) points out, the conclusion that CEE civil societies are weak is based on two normative generalizations: that the involvement of individuals in civil organizations is the most valuable type of engagement and that (political) advocacy is more important than non-advocacy (e.g., community building).

However, in the Czech Republic, citizens give preferences instead to individual ethical concerns and participation in non-advocacy organizations (Navrátil 2013). Thirdly, I emphasize important research on the dynamic character of the country's economic and political constellations which influence the nature of critique. Throughout this and the following subchapters, I emphasize the importance of the artistic dimension of critique rather than its social dimension in the Czech context as well as the complex relationship between both. The former refers to a call for autonomy, authenticity, and freedom from oppression; it is a critique of alienation and of the "rational management of space and time, and a quasi-obsessive pursuit of production for production sake" (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 38). The latter opposes egoism and private interests; calls for equality, solidarity and protection; and emphasizes "the growing poverty of the popular class in a society of unprecedented wealth" (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 38). The artistic dimension corresponds with an ideal of authenticity which could be found in different forms within the critique of Czech dissidents (e.g., Havel's understanding of politics, which defines the claims and positions of some movements still today—see below) and its legacy in today's civil society, within new social movements, and within radical activism (autonomous Left / anarchism). The social dimension of critique corresponds with the redistribution of wealth and is connected to trade unions that have been gradually losing their power (membership) since 1989. Throughout this chapter and the thesis as a whole, I criticize the clear division between old and new social movements as a sequence of historical entities or between social and artistic critiques as based on the difference between the groups of people that articulate them (see also Lazzarato 2007). The former could be criticized by urban movements which include both social and artistic critiques. The latter, an attachment of a type of thinking to a particular social actor, which Brazilian philosopher Rodrigo Nunes calls "transitivity," is criticized for its essentialism and blindness to the social construction of identities during the course of political fights (Nunes 2021). Therefore, I propose analyzing *old* and *new* or *social* and *artistic* as two dimensions of critique that have a dynamic and controversial relationship to each other and might even be situational—the argument I seek to prove through the proposed empirical analysis. I develop this argument in the section on urban movements.

Firstly, "organized" Czech civil society (Císař 2013a, 2013b) is populated by "advocates without members" (Skocpol in Císař 2013b). Rather than participatory, a transactional type of activism (see below) was developed in the Czech Republic, as well as in other CEE countries (ibid.). This type of activism focused on the accountability of the political system rather than

on participation. Císař emphasizes a difference between participation and activism: "While the former refers to what ordinary citizens do as individuals, i.e. on the micro-level, when they engage in politics, the latter encompasses the activities of more or less professional policy and social advocates at the organizational, i.e. mezzo, level" (Císař 2013a: 139–140). The emergence of this type of activism was fueled by foreign donors who aimed to support the type of organizations they were familiar with (which were not membership-based or participatory). With regard to the civil organization, democracy in the Czech Republic is characterized as representative rather than participatory (Císař 2008). Indeed, the most popular mode of political participation is voting in parliamentary elections, followed by participation in local public assemblies and petition signing, whereas participation in demonstrations or civil disobedience remains low (Vráblíková 2017). Paradoxically, political parties are one of the least trusted entities in Czech politics (Navrátil 2013).

However, the advocatory and rather representational orientation fuels the gap between citizens and CSOs, (Navrátil 2013). Czech citizens are rather disconnected from the CSO issues and are suspicious of CSO motives. Thus, CSOs are disembedded, alienated, and instrumental as Navrátil puts it. They do not seek members and see citizens as the targets of their advocacy activities. This disconnectedness is, again, connected to funding from foreign donors who are supportive of topics not necessarily the most prominent and important in the local context (the environmental, gender issues, minority rights). On the one hand, support from the United States in the 1990s and the Europeanization (support from European donors) that followed, a new political opportunity structure (the European Union) was opened and the local opportunity structure (via EU accession) changed for some activist groups. On the other hand, it led to their professionalization, the implementation of the business-like approaches (rather than informal relations), and superficial institutional solutions (Císař 2012; Císař and Vráblíková 2011).

Secondly, Czech citizens place emphasis on individual ethical concerns as regards issues of health, humanitarianism, and social questions rather than seeking participation in politicized organization. They would rather participate in non-advocacy organizations (e.g., social welfare, sport, culture, etc.). This type of participation is higher than in the West (Navrátil 2013). Practical reasons, such as a lack of time and money, also play a role and fuel preferences for indirect participation, such as donations. Navrátil connects this type of individual participation to the heritage of Václav Havel, who was a proponent of "non-political politics" (seeking the meaning of life instead of technology of power) and "living in truth" (reclaiming an authentic Self rather than seeking power), which is connected with individualism and a rather cold

attitude towards organized advocacy activism that remains institutional politics. At the beginning of the 1980s, in in his reflections on Charter 77, Havel emphasized the importance of the quest for change in the "hardly graspable atmosphere of life" and "personally lived and accepted responsibility for [the world]" rather than institutional change, adaptation to social mechanisms, or "tactical political or prognostic speculations" (Havel 2007[1983]: XIX), [translated by the author]. When Havel describes the goals of Charter 77, it remains a project for a new humanity based on personal moral responsibility and a return to the human's role as a "genuine creator of history" (Havel 2007[1983]: XX) who resists political systems. These ideas reflect the historical period when Charter 77 was written; however, they prevailed after 1989. Navrátil compares Havel with two other dissidents: "While neither impetus for organized (Tesař) nor for political (Benda) civic engagement were widely promoted, reflected and culturally reproduced, Havel's perspective seems to have prevailed after 1989" (2013: 31). He further continues by stating that the prevalence of this perspective is one of the possible explanations for the reluctance of Czech citizens to support organized civil society actors.

Importantly, the gap between citizens and CSOs as unwelcome institutional formations should be seen in the context of the gap between the types of demands articulated by parliamentary political parties and social movements. Protesters supplement the topics that are missing from the parliamentary discussion. Whereas a single economic framing is articulated by the parties in the parliament, the civil society articulates an artistic dimension via a range of unspoken issues (human rights, foreign policy, the environment) (Císař 2013a, 2013b; Císař and Vráblíková 2019). A social critique in the form of economic demands comprise one tenth of all protesters' demands from the 1993–2005 period, while ecological demands were the most common (23%) (Císař 2013a). This gap, as well as the gap between citizens and CSOs, points to the importance of particular types of individual participation as well as the prevalence of particular topics in the Czech civil sphere.

The call for authenticity and the promise of a pure Self free from social constraints is visible in Havel's concepts of "living in truth" and "non-political politics," which is ideal-typically different from a social critique that refers to redistribution demanded from the structures of institutional politics. The two notions could be analyzed either as belonging to new and old social movements that historically follow each other or to social and artistic types of critique. Despite the obvious historical embeddedness of both (e.g., in the industrial and post-industrial societies or in connection to class), in this work, I follow the idea that both types are instead two dimensions penetrating each other that can exist simultaneously. This is not to say that

historical, organizational, and other differences do not exist, but rather to affirm that these differences can coexist in one movement and create a dynamic relationship between each other. This is especially relevant to urban movements discussed below—they always have material demands (urban space), articulate the redistribution of power over space, and, at the same time, struggle against the domination of bureaucracy or, for example, the legal system (private property rights) and managerialism over creativity and expression in the post-political city (Swyngedouw 2009). I follow Offe here, who claims that it is not historical change that makes the old and new social movements different, but a different accent on a different set of values in a different historical time (Offe 1985). Offe suggests that there is nothing new in the claims for individual autonomy, equality, participation, and solidary social organization—these values are inventions of modernity, humanism, and the emancipatory ideas of the Enlightenment. However, deepening social control, the absence of class-specific rationality caused by the displacement of conflicts from one scene to another, and the absent self-limitation of institutions prevent them from being fulfilled. Like historical materialism, these values are modern. The *old* and the *new* are thus modern critiques of modernization, Offe claims. The accent on different dimensions that could coexist also reflects a change in the understanding of progress from linear to open and undefined—the historical gradation of "old-new-the newest" presupposes the former, and anti-austerity movements seem to be a return in this regard (Nunes 2021). Moreover, as Barša and Císař affirm with reference to the E.P. Thompson book *The Making of the English Working Class*, it is possible to find the "new" demands in the "old" labor movements, for example, craftspeople's demands for autonomy and dignity in the nineteenth century or demands for self-rule at the workplace among qualified workers in Germany and Italy after the First World War (Barša and Císař 2004). As other authors have demonstrated, the historical condition in CEE countries where austerity came with democratization (which problematizes the relationship between a class and a movement) is another point that challenges a clear distinction between the "old" and the "new" (Gagyi 2015). Nevertheless, even if this distinction is accepted, another distinction among the Left in CEE should be added between those who publicly refrain from supporting major left-wing economic principles for want of protecting their public image and those who combine them with the cultural agenda (Navrátil 2020). This notion suggests that the articulated types of critique are dependent on what actually can be said in particular temporal/spatial conditions. This notion also explains why the new advocacy organizations (for definition, see below) are economically conservative but culturally progressive (ibid.). To summarize, while one can claim based on the analysis proposed here that the artistic dimension is indeed more prominent in the Czech context

(especially with regard to topics articulated by NGOs), it is important to note that this is partially due to the analytical methodology and selected cases; urban movements and self-organized groups do not respect this prominence (see below).

Finally, the civil sphere in the Czech Republic is not solid and constant but is dynamic and fluid. Císař and Navrátil point out this dimension of Czech civil sphere development by applying Karl Polanyi's notion of a *double movement* (Císař and Navrátil 2017). Different configurations in the capitalist political economy of the 1990s caused different reactions to it. The 1990s was a time of nationally regulated capitalism with ideas of a distinct Czech way, a return to Europe, and a social democratic vision of social issues. At the time unions were the drivers of protests (though rather isolated) articulating issues such as social and economic policies, state governance, and the functioning of democratic institutions. The most used frame was economic effectiveness. This period of national protests was characterized by bigger protests but less events generally. The second period came after 1998 when the Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) entrenched globalized capitalism with transnational and European influences, privatizations, and support for foreign investors. Unions, with the involvement of the New Left (anarchists) and informal actors, organized protests. Radical activists from the Czech Republic as well as abroad targeted supranational institutions. However, cooperation between these actors became less frequent (NGOs moreover started to co-organize separate protests), and cooperation between trade unions and the New Left did not happen at all, unlike in other Western countries. This period is characterized by more events with less members articulating on topics related to economic and social policies. The involvement of the New Left brought more direct actions to the action repertoire, and the coercive tactics of police escalated in tandem. The frames of the economic effectiveness and socioeconomic rights were used twice as much as in the previous wave. The period after 2000 was also when the first local urban initiatives, discussed in the following chapters, appeared in the Czech Republic (Pixová 2020). Finally, the integration of the country into the neoliberal project and a "pierced threat of economic insecurity" (Císař and Navrátil 2017: 13) in the second half of the 2000s caused mobilizations against austerity during which socioeconomic rights and diversity were raised. However, generally, this case-based research suggests that most of the protests during the 1993–2010 period were organized rather around the efficient functioning of the state rather than socioeconomic rights, which became the major issue of the anti-austerity mobilizations.

In terms of political formation today, there has been an illiberal turn towards *technocratic populism*, with a strong economic dimension represented by calls from the former prime

minister Andrej Babiš and his political party, ANO 2011, for "managing the state as a company" (Havlík 2018). While use of the term "technocratic populist" might be seen as problematic here, it still reflects Andrej Babiš's ideological opposition to corrupted elites and the ideal of leading hard-working Czech people as a caring manager. This ideal-typical representation of the state is that of a private enterprise purified of political conflict (Cisar and Štětka 2016; Havlík 2018). The answer to this turn is a call for liberal values such as respect for democratic rules and institutions, an independent mass media and justice system, and fair politics decontaminated from conflicts of interests and unfounded abolitions. These demands are just as reformist as the demands of Charter 77 (a return of the Federal Assembly to the human rights obligations it had committed to in 1975): whether it be international human rights obligations or a depoliticalized justice system and independent media, they are calling for the political system to honor the commitments it has towards its citizenry. The mobilizations of Million Moments for Democracy[1] were massively attended; however, they followed the general tendency and maintained the sociocultural framing of issues rather than economic. The latter is generally, slowly gaining importance in the Czech Republic despite the general rejection of this type of discourse in post-communist societies (Musílek and Katrňák in Císař and Navrátil 2017). The form of civic protest that Million Moments for Democracy took, with little aspiration to be political (in a sense of creating a political party or in a conflictual sense of politics) or create a membership-based organization that proposes alternatives to the existing order, remains an organizational vision of Havel's, rather than that Benda's or Tesař's. It is important to note Babiš's reaction to these mobilizations: "We have freedom and democracy, and this is what we wanted 30 years ago. It is wonderful that people can express their interest and they are not persecuted or attacked for that. It is wonderful that we have free and democratic elections when people can freely elect their representatives" (Babiš in iROZHLAS 2019). This liberal format of public engagement is different from engagement in justification (Thévenot 2014). Whereas the former refers to expressing different political points of view, the second implies a discussion of the common good. The liberal grammar does not imply a discussion about the basic moral order of the society as it transforms all claims into personal opinions, which are to be accepted in pluralist democracies. In other words, the liberal grammar of political discussion allows for an apolitical plurality of views which may be articulated within a context where politics

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[1] Million Moments for Democracy (Milion chvilek pro demokracii) is a movement led by the association Million Moments, which organized a petition for the resignation of the Czech prime minister of the time, Andrej Babiš. Currently (22.01.2022), the petition has 438,453 signatures with a goal of one million. The association organized the biggest protests in the Czech Republic after 1989.

becomes an object of professional management with a single unconditional truth behind it—in the case of Andrej Babiš, this is efficiency).

1.2 Social movements studies in the Czech Republic

The genealogy of social movement studies (SMS) starts with the abolition of psychology-based collective behavioral theories and a move towards the systematic study of movements as rational actors, mainly with concepts such as resource mobilization, political opportunity structure, or the political process in American literature (Gagyi 2015; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). As Gagyi demonstrates, in Europe SMS is more connected with "new" social movements that appeared after 1968 and has a "more organic connection to earlier critical theories" (2015: 18) through such figures as Frank Parkin or Alain Touraine. In a similar vein, Cox and Fominaya call for a reinterpretation of European social movements on the basis of the theories and activities of engaged intellectuals such as Simone de Beauvoir and Herbert Marcuse (Cox and Flesher Fominaya 2013). "New" social movement studies is more oriented towards research on the internal dynamics of the movements, the self-constitution of the Self, and the subjective level of politics as opposed to institutional politics (Farro and Lustiger-Thaler 2014; Munro 2014; Rebughini 2014), in other words, towards the process of subjectivation, as Touraine puts it—an action of freedom by a subject that opposes economic rationality (McDonald 1994; Touraine 1995). Besides old and new social movements, there are movements that function on the basis of autonomy, the politics of the act, and prefiguration. They might seem to be close to new social movements in terms of their attempts to create a disembedded Self unrooted in an institutional order; however, they have different assumptions about politics, different relationships with an institutional order and its repressive mechanisms, and a different position in/towards civil society. Some authors call them the "newest social movements" (Day 2006) to distinguish them from the old and new. They struggle for a "decolonization of everyday life" and the exploration of "a combination of culture and politics as a means for the creation of a new person and new forms for living" (Katsiaficas 2006: 3-4).

In Czech sociology, radical activism is usually analyzed from the perspective of SMS and the analysis of prefigurative politics. The first approach is based on the analysis of resource mobilization theory and the political process model. The second focuses on politics at the (inter)subjective level that takes a critical stance towards the politics of demands and emphasizes escape from the institutional political system. In this and the following sections, I investigate the analysis of radical activism in Czech sociology from both perspectives. The goal

of these sections is not to provide a full overview of SMS in the Czech Republic, which are indeed rich (for environmental activism, see Císař 2010; Fagan 2004; Fagan and Jehlička 2003; Jehlička, Sarre, and Podoba 2005; and Novák 2017c; for feminism, see Císař and Vráblíková 2007; Ferber and Raabe 2003; Hájek, Kabele, and Vojtíšková 2006; Jarkovská 2006; and Lišková 2009; for subcultures, see Charvát and Kuřík 2018; Císař and Koubek 2012; and Slačálek 2018; for anti-globalization, alter-globalization, and anti-war movements, see Císař and Slačálek 2007 and Navrátil 2010). Instead, I demonstrate two prominent lines of thinking, to which pragmatic sociology appears to be an alternative.

Ondřej Císař distinguishes five different modes of activism: old participatory activism (represented mainly by trade unions and socioeconomic struggle); new transactional activism (represented mainly by foreign-financed NGOs with a focus on post-material demands); new radical activism and civil self-organization (which do not mobilize many people and do not survive the period organizationally); and episodic mass mobilizations (Děkujeme, odejdete! protests (2008)). The majority of these categories (old participatory activism / unions, advocacy organizations, and radical activism) are also key categories representing the Czech Left (along with the Communists, who are however not a movement) (Navrátil 2020). To make this categorization, Císař relies on several assumptions. Firstly, the categorization itself comes from SMS (Petrova and Tarrow 2007; Tilly 2005; Tilly and Tarrow 2015). Categories such as repertoire of actions, the politics of demands, political opportunity structure, resource mobilization, and transactional, mobilizing, and advocational capacity apply to the Czech context (Císař 2008, 2017; Císař, Navrátil, and Vráblíková 2011). Secondly, an ability to mobilize people is different from transactional capacity, defined as an ability to make "'weak organizational ties' largely based on resource exchange and synonymous with inter-organizational cooperation, and not on 'social bonds' established through shared membership" (Císař 2017: 188)—the common form of such activism is an NGO. Thus, activism without participation and participation without activism exists, which means that being active in the civil sphere does not presuppose the (constant or temporal) participation of larger numbers of people or the involvement and organization of large protests or demonstrations; this might also take the form of a network between smaller active organizations (NGOs). Events organized by transactional activists around ecology, animal rights, and human rights issues are the most frequent in the Czech Republic (Císař 2013a, 2013b). However, Czech activism is not based only on NGOs. Of the protests analyzed by Císař from 1993 to 2005, the numbers suggest that self-organized activism is the most prominent, followed by transactional, radical, and

participatory (Císař 2013b). Participatory activism (unions) is the only one that has a high proportion of bigger events and focuses on economic issues; it is also the only type of activism which is membership-based (ibid.). Participation however is getting lower: in 2018 the union density in the Czech Republic was 11.5%, with the number of employees in unions dropping from 1,332,000 in 1998 to 505,000 in 2018 (OECD 2018).

1.2.1. Czech radical activism conceptualized by SMS

The country's radical activists in the 1990s and early 2000s had a rather low mobilization capacity and low advocacy capacity (Císař 2008; Císař, Navrátil, and Vráblíková 2011; Navrátil 2020). This means that radical activists are neither able to mobilize great numbers of people nor sufficiently advocate or participate in the political process (which they also do not wish to do). The political opportunity structure is closed to them, but they also have little interest in participating in institutional politics. Both these characteristics make this type of activism different from the old and new types, which can mobilize more people and play a role in the political process (especially, trade unions, which managed to organize a tripartite in the 1990s). On the other hand, the participatory character of protests is important for radical activists who seek to mobilize people. Radical activists usually do not build dense networks with other non-state actors and are rather reactionary in their activities. They usually target international organizations, political actors, and public opinion, and their agenda is connected to international security and foreign policy. It is worth mentioning that Císař's analysis includes the Global Street Party (1998) and protests against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (2000) that took place in Prague in the context of the alter-globalization movement, which suggests that the agenda of (reactionary) radical activists was set by the historical period of the analysis (a "globalized period of capitalism") (Císař and Navrátil 2017) rather than being an essential characteristic of the movement. These radical protests could be described as reactionary and historically embedded in the sense that they were resisting the various configurations of economic, political, and institutional arrangements inherent in the global capitalist order (i.e., in its framing). However, when the urban dimension of radical activism is explored, it becomes proactionary, because it seeks to create a particular urban form (alternative space, squat, DIY space, etc.) (see below). This dimension is not grasped through the analytical means of SMS and is one of the gaps this research addresses, that is, the importance of infrastructure in the development of a movement. In terms of human and material resources, radical activists are good at mobilizing volunteers, but they have less income in comparison to

old and new activists and thus rely mostly on contributions from non-members and selling publications (Císař 2008; Císař, Navrátil, and Vráblíková 2011) .

Importantly, resource mobilization (material reproduction of the movement) is activism in itself; means are as important as goals (Císař 2008). Radical activists according to Císař do not challenge the political opportunity structure, which is closed to them, but they also do not have this as their main goal. They have limited resources, and therefore, they are in a constant situation of exclusion. Their self-representation is based on a small number of participants and militant strategies (ibid.: 33). In terms of action repertoire, radical activists use mostly non-violent demonstrations and direct actions characteristic of this type of activism (ibid.), but also performances, festivals, and, to a lesser extent, petitions (Císař 2013a, 2013b). This is the only type of activism that includes violent actions in its repertoire. One of the most successful and famous protests was the Global Street Party in May 1998, which ended with an unprofessional and brutal police raid (Císař 2008: 72). The street party managed to get the topic of globalization into the media. Another street party was held that same year in the summer, and a third party finished with an attack on the US embassy in 1999. After 2000 the street parties were unable to attract as many participants, and their attractiveness waned.

In terms of the position of the radical movements within organized civil society being representational as opposed to participatory in nature, one must conclude that radical movements exist beyond organized civil society in the above-described way. They seek participation (though not mass); they refrain from cooperation with a wide range of actors (the creation of transactional ties is not the meaning of their politics); they do not seek the representation of some groups; and, in their critique, their form of organization and action repertoire differs from liberal topics and NGO advocacy. Moreover, as is demonstrated in the following text, their way of doing politics is far from "non-political politics" or "living in truth" as it is highly politicized and influenced by prefiguration, which is closely connected to the notion of the private as political. Though they strongly articulate ideas of autonomy from institutional politics, this is not an unwillingness or an inability to participate in the institutional political process, rather it is an attempt to create politics anew—beyond hegemony. And while they share an accent upon the politics of the Self in the vein of the artistic critique, they also emphasize the importance of labor organization (see below). Moreover, in their urban dimension, radical movements always deal with (institutional) power because urban space is considered the ultimate site of struggle against the power of the state and the capitalist order

(Harvey 1973, 2010, 2013; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1989) . The next section explores the particularities of the radical left-wing (mainly anarchist) movement from which Klinika arose.

1.3. Politics of the act and prefiguration: Anarchism and autonomy in the Czech Republic

1.3.1 History

There have been two main groups of radical left-wing activists in the Czech Republic since 1989: Trotskyists and anarchists. The Trotskyist branch is beyond the scope of this work; in addition to other reasons, autonomous zones and urban conflicts have not been that important to this group in the Czech Republic. The following text briefly describes the history of the Czech anarchist movement followed by the analytical apparatus through which it is analyzed—prefiguration and the politics of the act.

The majority of the anarchist movement that existed in 1920s Czechoslovakia joined the Communist Party and reappeared as a movement only after 1989 (there were, however, figures in between who exited close to anarchism) (Tomek and Slačálek 2006). Tomek and Slačálek try to grasp the notions of anti-authoritarianism in a critique of the bureaucratic socialist state prior to 1989; for example, in Petr Uhl's 1980 text *Program společenské samosprávy* (Program for societal self-rule), the author calls for the elimination of the components of the state and the installation of a self-ruled society. This program, as Tomek and Slačálek show, was inspirational for the anarchist movement, and they printed part of it in the anarchist journal *A-kontra*, a journal that would later be important for the anarchist branch of the Czech alter-globalization movement (Navrátil 2020). The roots of the anarchist movement in the Czech Republic however stem from the 1980s peace movement and punk subculture, with inspiration afterward coming from the German autonomous scene (radical anti-fascism, squatting) (Tomek and Slačálek 2006). It is worth mentioning that the originally closed and small hardcore punk scene grew and then gradually fragmented during the 2000s into countercultural, subcultural, commercialized, and instrumentally-oriented activist components (Císař and Koubek 2012).

Organization-wise, the anarchist movement is dynamic, with numerous organizations functioning for shorter or longer periods of time. These include, to name only a few, the Czechoslovak Anarchist Society, The Anarchist Federation, Antifascist Action, the Czech Anarchist Federation, the Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation, and the Federation of Social Anarchists. The Anarchist Federation was a key anarchist platform in the 1990s (Navrátil 2020). Gradually, a syndicalist branch separated from it. One of the prominent representations of this

branch was the Organization of Revolutionary Anarchists—Solidarity, which sought to organize workers beyond parties and unions. This group was unsatisfied with the changes following 1989, was open to discussion with unions and employers, and proposed ideas such as decentralization, collective business ownership, a strong union role, direct democracy, and so on. Later it was transformed into the Collectively Against Capital (Kolektivně Proti Kapitálu, KPK). Another prominent organization from 1990—the Federation of Social Anarchists— shared anti-fascist stances with the Anarchist Federation. Anti-fascism was a strong branch in the anarchist movement, represented by organizations such as Antifascist Action. Besides the organizations, journals like the already mentioned *A-kontra* and others like *Autonomie* (later renamed *Konfrontace*), *Existence*, *Svobodná mysl* were important projects of the Czech Radical Left (Navrátil 2020; Tomek and Slačálek 2006). The most visibility the movement gained was during the "globalized phase of capitalism" (Císař and Navrátil 2017), with the renowned Global Street Party in 1989, the protests against the IMF and World Bank in 2000 (which were connected to the broader coalition Initiative Against Economic Globalization), those against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO; platform AntiNATO) in 2002, and later, the protests against the war in Iraq (Tomek and Slačálek 2006).

The anarchist movement is based on various types of critiques focused on resistance to militarism; issues such as ecology (which are key to the critique of Western civilization), anti-racism, and anti-fascism; resistance to economic globalization and the prevention of far-right groups from entering politics (Bastl 2001; Tomek and Slačálek 2006). Two streams can be distinguished: cultural-social or post-materialist (individualistic, oriented towards lifestyle, squatting and music subcultures) and political-economic or syndicalist (collectivist, focused on the liberation of the working class, economizing, collectivism) (Bastl 2001; Navrátil 2020; Tomek and Slačálek 2006). This cleavage itself reflects what was discussed above—the absence of a clear distinction between the "old" and the "new," the social and artistic critique. The anarchist movement might be both anti-authoritarian (mainly regarding organization), emphasizing the (inter)subjective level of politics, and also build networks of solidarity and struggle for labor emancipation. At present, as Navrátil points out, "the autonomist/individualistic version of anarchism is dominant in the Czech Republic" (2020: 31).

1.3.2. Autonomous and anarchist movements: The logic of affinity, the politics of the act, and prefiguration

While shades of both types of critique can be found in anarchist and autonomous movements, this activism cannot be easily grasped through the conceptual framework of old or new social

movements. Following "European traditions that focus on theoretical-philosophical analysis of the broader field of social change, and attempt to assess the viability of different logics of struggle in particular socio-historical circumstances" (Day 2006: 717), Richard Day proposes the concept of the *newest social movements*. He claims that both old and new movements remain within the logic of hegemony. Whereas the old social movements addressed their demands towards the state through recognition of its power, the new ones were more focused on individual freedom and emancipation; resistance to information; symbolic codes, signs, and social relationships that are produced by institutional systems of power (Melucci 1989); and subjectivation in the sense of creating "a subjectivity liberated from its inferiority … [which] is no longer merely lived; it is claimed, demanded as a right" (Touraine 2007: 95; see also McDonald 1994; Touraine 1995, 2007). However, this does not mean that the new social movements rejected the power of the state like the autonomous movements do. On the contrary, following Bagguley and Touraine, Day argues that the new social movements were pursuing politics of protest and reform which are related to state power: the social space of the new social movements remains within the space of nation states, their repertoire of actions (protests) addressed the state, and their successes were evaluated by legal changes or "shifts in hegemonic common-sense assumptions and practices" (Day 2006: 732). The newest social movements, on the other hand, exist beyond states and corporations. Historically, these movements come out of the 1990s, and their break with the new ones comes in an escape from the logic of hegemony towards the logic of affinity and from the politics of demand towards the politics of the act (see below). In his book *Gramsci is Dead* (2005), Day gives examples of the movements, spaces, and other entities that he refers to in this framework: the Zapatistas in Chiapas, the asambleistas in Argentina, the Landless People's Movement in South Africa, the squatter's movement in Europe (and the social center movement in Italy in particular), Reclaim the Streets, Independent Media Centers, Food Not Booms, and other movements that are, one way or another, related to the practice of autonomy beyond the hegemonic structures of power.

What is important about such a conceptual move is not its reference to the particular movements, spaces, and initiatives that have an autonomous character, but its reflection of the dead end to which both the old and new social movements came in their revolutionary imagination. Importantly, this consideration is missing from the American tradition of SMS, which is based on an analysis of collective behavior, resource mobilization, and political opportunity structure. Day himself touches upon the topic of the revolutionary imagination. On the one hand, he interprets it as theoretical questions that post-structural theories pose to the

revolutionary imagination (e.g., the theoretical attempts of anarchism and Marxism to address the post-structural critique led to their theoretical reincarnation in autonomist Marxism and post-anarchism (Day 2005)). On the other hand, what underlines Day's reasoning is the unsustainability of both imaginations: (a) the class-based political revolution that is made by establishing a new hegemonic power through a party organization that had its historical moment in 1917 ("Lenin-Gramsci assemblage" (Day 2006: 721)) and (b) the revolution that displaces class and struggle for plurality and autonomy through bottom-up organizing with its historical moment in 1968 (Day 2006; Nunes 2021). Whether because of their reference to hegemony or not, both of these imaginaries were defeated. This first found its realization in the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union. The second led to a recomposition of the capitalist order, which digested the 1968 critique and came up with even more sustainable and legitimate structures of power based exactly on the demands of the new social movements (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). It is worth citing Day here to emphasize the comprehension of 1968 in anarchist thought:

> The wild ride of May 1968 had culminated in something worse than a return to the status quo, since it seemed as though not only this particular revolution, but the revolution as such, had made its final exit from European history. (2005: 142)

This defeat led to a double melancholia in leftist circles (Nunes 2021) and a need to reinterpret the meaning of revolution. Without this interpretation, the Left, anarchist or not, would stay in the moment of defeat and in constant crisis, managing risks instead of operating on a horizon of expectations (Paulo Arantes in Nunes 2021: 112). Day's concept of the newest social movements and the way it is applied in the Czech sociology and political science must be seen in this context—and, in general, SMS and left politics analysis should not skip this important point.

Before discussing and applying this line of thinking in the Czech context, I will first briefly summarize Day's elaborations on the logic of affinity and direct action and then speak about the concept of prefiguration that is essential for the struggles of far-left social movements. The latter, as well as the idea of revolution, works with a temporal dimension, but, in contrast with the revolution-to-come, it brings the future into the present and pays special attention to how this translocation of the future is done.

To understand Day's main concept—the logic of affinity—I will briefly elaborate on his understanding of hegemony. Firstly, in the Gramscian vein, hegemony is related to the values and institutional forms of the dominant order, and thus, counter-hegemonic struggle means

installing a new hegemony instead of the old one. Secondly, a hegemony of hegemony is defined by Das as "the commonsensical assumption that meaningful social change—and social order itself—can only be achieved through the deployment of universalizing hierarchical forms, epitomized by the nation-state, but including conceptions of the world-state as well" (Day 2006: 717). In other words, it is a situation whereby the revolutionary subject is dominated in an attempt to generalize its values and forms instead of remaining emergent and unincorporated (Day 2005).

What goes against hegemony is the logic of affinity. The logic of affinity is connected to the concept of social revolution. Firstly, social revolution, in contrast with political revolution, addresses all aspects of life and is not limited to institutional politics (e.g., Lenin's vision). It presupposes that production exists outside of the factory and is embedded within the social fabric as a whole (an argument articulated, e.g., by the Italian operaisti). As Negri and Hardt argue, in the social factory everybody becomes a worker—this is the logic that globally unites the multitude (2001). Secondly, in the anarchist understanding, social revolution has a disruptive nature. It means "*breaking* rather than *taking* state power" as Day following Bakunin suggests (2005: 113). In contrast with political revolution, social revolution is not carried out by a small number of leaders who install a new domination (and not even by a single subject). It has a form of chaos and disorder (anarchy) that leads to anarchism—the just society. Those who are engaged in this process follow the logic of affinity. This is the logic that lies behind direct actions, which are about "*displacement* and *replacement*" (Day 2006: 719) of the statist and corporate organizations that lead, on the one hand, to fragmentation and individualization and to construction of the subject by the hegemonic forces on the other—this is the notion of colonization submitted by Kropotkin (Kropotkin in Day 2005: 114) as opposed to the decolonization of everyday life put forward by Katsiaficas (2006). Thirdly, behind the logic of social revolution, as Day claims, is a Guattarian vision of molecular revolution (contrasted with or complemented by molar (Nunes 2021)) which happens at the same time in different spaces according to the historical and spatial conditions. Affinity is thus defined as (a) closeness among activists within struggles in and for autonomous spaces (including spaces of direct action) that exist beyond institutional politics; (b) overcoming hegemonic ways of producing the Self by practicing an autonomous subjectivation together; and (c) proximity with other spatially and temporally detached struggles. Importantly, Day points out the significance of the space in which affinity develops (social centers and autonomous zones), as well as the physical closeness of activists—living together, for example (2005; 2006).

The second important concept in the newest social movements is *direct action*. Instead of making counter-hegemonic demands of the hegemonic order, the logic of direct action helps the movement to disappear from the hegemony and puts the current state of power relations in brackets. Day compares the *newest* social movements to the *new* and points out that the latter remains "within a hegemonic conception of the political, and … [are] only marginally and nascently aware of the possibilities inherent in actions oriented neither to achieving state power nor to ameliorating its effects" (2005: 70). Direct actions but not demands are what appear to be the motor for social change here and now: they search "for the future in the present, the identification of already existing activities which embody new, alternative forms of social cooperation and ways of being" (Cleaver in Day 2005: 156). Day distinguishes political direct action from other action types:

> Practicing a politics of the act does not mean simply "doing as you please", just as direct action does not mean simply "blowing things up". All actions are carried out in complex contexts involving other groups and communities, each of which must be engaged according to its positioning relative to state, corporate and other forms of domination and exploitation. (Day 2006: 734)

The decolonization of everyday life is a reaction to a society of control, and a state that becomes an apparatus of capture bringing the outside inside (Deleuze and Guattari 2004; Foucault and Deleuze 1977). Rather than morality (in relation to the transcendental right or wrong, universal constraining rules) it is ethics ("a set of optional rules that assess what we do, what we say, in relation to the ways of existing involved" (Deleuze 1995: 100), rules that respect the singularity) that has emancipatory potential (ibid.). Ethics in this case is "a matter of evaluating or assessing each situation and each encounter in their specificity… [which enables the subject/Self the freedom] to experiment and to create its own style of life" (Marneros 2019: n.p.). As I will show later in this thesis, it is an ethical position specifically that enables critical reality tests inside an institutional order. The singularity of this ethical position and the ability to assess a situation based on the uniqueness of those involved and existing within a situation was articulated by Klinika's supporters—those politicians who questioned the neoliberal urban order and defended enthusiasm and local interests in the course of urban interventionism. An ethical position is also what enables a radical critique based on existential tests—a general questioning of the order which is not based on the predefined test formats, but on a singular, situational, and, in a sense, exclusive understanding of justice.

The last important concept for the autonomous to emphasize here is prefiguration. Prefiguration presents a further attempt to solve the problem of the dead end in revolutionary thinking, mainly in terms of its lack of imagination with regard to the future and in terms of the means of future approximation. There are two components of the concept that are frequently found in the literature. The first refers to a particular temporality. Prefiguration is a process of prefiguring, that is, anticipating the future in the present: "'prefiguration', refers to the attempted construction of alternative or utopian social relations in the present, either in parallel with, or in the course of, adversarial social movement protest" (Yates 2015: 1). The second component is usually described as an equivalence between the means and the ends (ibid.), the most common example being the use of a non-hierarchical decision-making process as way of anticipating a non-hierarchical political order. In what follows, I will investigate the functional and strategical meaning of prefiguration and then return to the question of time.

Prefiguration can be analyzed from the perspective of its function and strategical meaning. Yates points out the multiplicity of prefiguration functions including efforts to substitute or supplant institutions; "experimentation, innovation and learning"; resourcing collective actions; and direct achievement in the here and now and the "micropolitics of political activity … that symbolizes a distinction from the 'old left' … where means are justified by the ends" (2020: 12). He points out the importance of these functions to the processes of social movement reproduction (resourcing movements, the micropolitics of everyday life through in which reproduction happens), mobilization (including all five functions of prefiguration), and coordination (prefiguration contains an "emergent element of coordination within it" (ibid.: 15), and, as a process of supplanting institutions with alternatives, it presents a plan itself for social change). In his other text, Yates (2015) points out that the equivalence between the means and the ends is very blurred, and he calls for a more nuanced analysis of the exact practices that might be political and non-political. Yates states that rather than a mere equivalence between the means and the ends, one must consider the processes of collective experimentation in everyday practice and protest performance, the creation and development of new frames and perspectives for the movements (e.g., during debates and workshops), new forms of conduct following from these new frames and perspectives, interventions into material environments (spaces that are made for living together), and the diffusion of prefigurative practices. The last notion implies that activists who do prefigurative politics attempt to spread them to the wider society and not just live through the desired values themselves.

Maeckelbergh claims that prefiguration is a strategy used specifically by the alterglobalization movement (Maeckelbergh 2011). This movement does not have predetermined and singular goals but rather a network of collectives and affinity groups united in action. Its organizational structure is neither hierarchical nor fixed; it is itself a prefiguration of imagined principles of desired social organization. The alterglobalization movement is also based on a rejection of a linear imagination about social change. In its place, it creates and recreates social change in small steps at the present moment. Finally, the movement does not demand the decentralization of the state, which is itself centralized and does not address the public as a separate category but rather as a not yet engaged people who could be through the process of connectivity.

Besides functions and the strategic meaning of prefiguration, its particular temporality as different from linear thinking about social change must be emphasized. Prefiguration is a "a *recursive* temporal framing in which events at one time are interpreted as a *figure* pointing to its *fulfilment* in later events" (Gordon 2018: 5) and is a "process of reassurance," in the sense of being part of a history that moves in a particular direction in which activists aid this forward motion. These notions however refer not only to the anarchist strategy but also to the Christian religion and Marxism (with its ideas about a vanguard party, prefiguring a proletariat state and future that comes as a necessity). Prefiguration can have a substantive definition (the embodiment of the movements' goals) and a value-content definition (the expression of the ultimate ends of revolution, e.g., popular self-emancipation). However, it also contains a dismissal of the future as unclear and mythical, and its placement in the present "may offer false comfort in the absence of revolutionary promise" (Gordon 2018: 14). Based on this critique (recursive and not generative temporality and reassurance instead of confrontation with "a toxic future" (ibid.)), Gordon proposes the use of Bloch's concept of a concrete utopia rather than prefiguration because it proposes a generative temporal framing while also drawing on anxious and catastrophic hope.

Other authors point out that the role of future in prefiguration is not that straightforward: rather than recursive temporality, it implies a composition of bits of present and future and their intercommunication. Krøijer proposes "figurations of future", that is, actions that "give […] determinate form to an indeterminate future" (Krøijer 2015: 3). Time in this perspective is not linear, and future is presented from a "co-present bodily perspective" (ibid.: 3). He also emphasizes that, in the course of his research, it was participation in direct actions and everyday activities and not interviews that brought him relevant data because imaginations of future are articulated through actions, not language. "By taking its point of departure in the body, time

becomes a question of simultaneous angle or perspective rather than continuum or sequence" (ibid.: 3). This implies the future as present in bodily practices ranging from public direct actions to dumpster diving. Each action and moment of time makes a context for others and, in this process of mirroring, there is a "power of digression" that sometimes brings about new forms of protest and organization without relying on a master plan. Events have meaning only in the context of each other and not separately. Activists' actions are figurations of time in which "reality is not *pre*formed, … but *per*formed … which implies a constant reconfiguration of social relationships" (ibid.: 15). Activism in such a manner is a way of *doing* time; moreover, as I will show later in the thesis, it is also a particular way of *doing* space.

For all of the abovementioned aspects of prefiguration, affinity and the creation of a collective body in one space and time, even if the future is involved, is important. Without physical closeness, direct action, the enactment of future in the here and now in the course of everyday life, the construction of decolonized and free selves, or prefiguration is not possible. This is why later in the thesis, I call attention to another important aspect of prefiguration: that it happens on one level of human engagement with reality (that of familiarity) and presents one type of politics alongside other types of engagement and other types of politics that movements do simultaneously. In such a vein, I do not see prefiguration as a single strategy, function, or temporality that describes the movement. There are different strategies on different levels: indeed, whereas on the level of everyday life inside the social center prefiguration might be important, this is not a strategy for gaining, protecting, and sustaining urban space for the social center. In the latter case, engagement in public justification, confirmation and critique, plays an essential role—though prefiguration plays a role in it as well. The temporality of social centers itself presupposes prefigurative here and now logic; usually, it is not clear when they will be evicted. This might happen sooner in an unwelcoming political climate or later in cases where the urban space is stuck in unresolvable bureaucratic or legal (dis)order (e.g., undefined ownership). This kind of temporality of space and constant threat of eviction does not always allow for long-term planning, creating a favorable ground for the here-and-now revolutionary imagination. Brining the future to the present in this circumstance is itself temporarily defined by space.

In the Czech context this line of thinking is presented by Arnošt Novák and Bob Kuřík (Novák 2017a; Novák and Kuřík 2019). Novák and Kuřík, following Richard Day, take a critical perspective towards the theory of social movements. The authors criticize, for example, the resource mobilization component of this theory by stating that the lack of resources is an

ideological stance of the Radical Left and autonomous movements rather than a structural limitation. Novak's critical reading of Císař's work suggests that radical activists in this sense are not excluded and independent, rather they seek autonomy, an important value for them. "Autonomy" is understood as a complex term: as a practice (self-rule and the creation of institutions that allow for citizen empowerment and direct participation in politics); as a value in a new, non-consumerist and non-individualistic society; as a creation of new subjectivity suitable for the imagined society (Novák 2020). Importantly, on all of these levels, autonomy resists the state, understood to be a hierarchically organized bureaucratic structure that is outside society and dominating it—the tension between the two significations of modernity: the rational mastery of capitalism and autonomy as the central signification of democracy (Castoriadis 1997). The bureaucratic apparatus is a practice of meaning creation, meanings which must be interpreted by those who encounter this apparatus; thus, they do interpretative labor in contrast to those who create significations. The apparatus produces the norms of hierarchy (and therefore, its value) which are expanded to the private sector (an interconnectedness between the private and the public). And, finally, it creates subjectivities through the interconnectedness of power and knowledge, as explored by Michael Foucault (Castoriadis 1990; Graeber 2015).

Autonomous movements thus present different dynamics from party politics, as well as a different temporal and spatial dimensionality which is not based on electoral periods and nation states (Novák 2020). The meaning of these movements is continuous destabilization of the bureaucratic logic implied in an institutional order. Freedom, according to both Day, Graeber, and Novák and Kuřík in the Czech context is exercised through direct action—"acting as if one is already free" (Graeber 2015: 97)—and is a presupposition of democratic politics, not a demand as party politics presents it. In another article dedicated to the question of hegemony, Novák and Kuřík (2019) present a critique of Císař's work by combining a classic category of SMS, a political opportunities structure, with theories of prefigurative politics and the politics of the act. They focus on political squatting, mainly via the case of Klinika, and claim that radical activism is not about demand, but about the lived-through experience of emancipation and prefiguration, meaning a vanishing distinction between the way of fighting and the goal, the political means and the ends, and living through the future world in the present (Yates 2015, 2020)).

Whereas the politics of the act means that freedom and emancipation are values to be lived through, demand that usually targets the state is always about establishing new hegemony and

grasping power. The main conclusion of their work is that Císař's category of radical activism should be more precise, which could be reached through qualitative research. This means that (1) the political structure is not always closed to the activists, it is flexible and fragile, and activists might use these possibilities when they are present. However there has been a general turn toward normalization and enclosure, with the voices of "right-wing pragmatists" (Novák and Kuřík 2019: 15) becoming more resonant after 2000s. This conclusion is much closer to the way in which critique is analyzed as interdependent with an institutional order (Boltanski 2011) or to the way domination is analyzed as never being total and always leaving space for resistance (Courpasson and Vallas 2016; Foucault 1987). In this context, radical activists can build strategic networks with institutional actors, as the case of Klinika demonstrates (a network with the local Green Party, support from NGOs). (2) Political targeting and the demands of radical activism must be complemented with notions about the politics of the act and prefiguration. It also means that (3) internal dynamics influence the politics done by squats and their attitude towards their urban environment.

1.4. Urban movements and squatting in the Czech Republic after 1989

In this subchapter I introduce the main difference between the American and European canon of SMS and urban movements using the example of the Czech Republic contextualized within the CEE region. Importantly, I speak here about urban movements (as well as American and European canons) not only in reference to the actual movement or dimension of a movement (urban, social, artistic critique) (ontic dimension of reality), but also in reference to the theoretical and methodological frame, which I will alternate with the pragmatic approach in the chapters to come (ontological dimension). As for the difference between both mentioned canons, urban movements, firstly, do not fit in the category of "old" and "new" either historically or conceptually. Historically, urban movements and old/new social movements have different paths. The former are reactions to the commodification of land and the evolution of what Harvey calls "the second circuit of capital" (Harvey 2010), whereas the latter consider different axes of oppression in the course of history (either based on one dimension or a multiplicity of dimensions (Day 2006)). After the Velvet Revolution, as in other CEE countries (Jacobsson and Korolczuk 2019, 2019), urban initiatives in the Czech Republic started to emerge, mainly in the 2000s, and thus later than other social movements. On the other hand, conceptually, urban movements do not fit into the categories of "old" or "new" because they are always composed of material (demands for space) and post-material critiques (e.g., the critique of the post-political city) and function in a very complex urban fabric produced socially

through inseparable practices, symbolic meanings, utilitarian functions, and material forms (Castells 1983; Jacobsson 2015). And, even if we consider the radical form of urban activism—political squatting, which is based on direct action and the logic of affinity—it never escapes an institutional order due to the very nature of urban space, a site of inescapable struggle for and against power (Harvey 1973, 2010, 2013; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1989). Secondly, urban movements should be analyzed with close attention paid to institutional political and market developments happening in the CEE at a different speed and with particular characteristics. In conceptual terms, this means that urban movements analysis presupposes a more precise analysis of power structures then political opportunity structure or hegemonic order, with special attention focused on municipal governments—the scale most important for urban politics. Thirdly, urban movements challenge some assumptions about politics and the civil sphere in CEE countries—in terms of the dynamics between radicality and reformism, the NGO-ization of civil society in the region, and its fragmented character (Jacobsson 2015; Jacobsson and Korolczuk 2019; Pixová 2018). Last but not the least, urban movements in CEE challenge the methodological and theoretical assumptions of SMS as such (Jacobsson and Korolczuk 2020).

To start with, urban movements cannot be separated into historical phases of "old" or "new" (Jacobsson 2015). As Castells shows, the Paris Commune and the famous rents strikes in Glasgow and Leeds existed before or during the old movements phase and yet present genuine examples of urban movements (Castells 1983). In CEE, the emergence of urban initiatives does not follow the same historical path and predominantly appeared in the globalized capitalism period. These developments represent "a new phase in the development of post-socialist civil societies" (Jacobsson 2015: 5). In Prague, conservationist or civil initiatives such as the Club for Old Prague or Friends of the Lesser Town and Hradčany had already appeared in the 1990s (as well as squatting—see below). But the majority of initiatives started to emerge in the 2000s and 2010s, a period of *awakening civil society* and a reaction to the consolidation of the neoliberal urban order (Pixová 2012, 2018, 2020; Pixová and Sládek 2016). Advocacy and lobbying organizations (e.g., Praguewatch), artists in urban space (buskers), and radical activism appeared in this period (Pixová and Sládek 2016). Authors claim that such a historicity is caused by the visibility of the effects of uneven capitalist urban development in these years.

Conceptually, critical urban actors could hardly be thought of as old or new social movements because they embrace both social and artistic critiques. Urban movements always articulate a demand for a fair redistribution of urban space and/or access to valuable resources—spatial

justice, in Edward Soja's words (2010). This demand is essentially material. However, at the same time, movements give a different meaning to urban space (Castells 1983). In the Lefebvrian sense, they create representational spaces (squares become sites of democracy), change the representation of space (conservational initiatives that struggle for protection of significant areas) in combination with the introduction of particular social practices in the use of space (communal ways of living inside squats) (Lefebvre 1991). The urban meaning, function, and form (for their definition, see the following chapter) which movements struggle to change are neither exactly material nor strictly post-material. Rather, they are a combination of both inside a dynamic urban fabric that does not (even conceptually) need reduction to two categories. Importantly, urban movements resist urban forms created by the state and capitalist order, as well as the social imaginary significations of capitalism, such as rational mastery (Castoriadis 1997) through the logic of the local, the embedded, and the attached instead of the rational, guided by economic laws, and the alienated (as it is shown further in this research).

Secondly, the context of institutional and social transformation is usually analyzed in a very precise manner in urban movement studies. The discrepancy between different aspects of urban change in CEE after 1989 is always considered—mainly, between the democratic development of local municipalities and the implementation of the laissez-faire economy (Jacobsson 2015; Pixová 2020; Sýkora and Bouzarovski 2012). On the one hand, the democratic mechanisms for negotiating with developers and investors are still undeveloped (e.g., public-private partnerships). During the first fifteen years after the transformation, urban planning was seen as contradictory to the market and preference was given to clientelism and ad-hoc decisions instead of a long-term strategy (Jacobsson 2015; Sýkora and Bouzarovski 2012; Temelová 2009). Not only are organizational and fiscal capacities lacking in Czech municipalities, there is also a democratic deficit in municipal politics, meaning there are no mechanisms nor the will to engage citizens in the planning process (Pixová 2018, 2020). Prague authorities welcomed the neoliberal accumulation regime, neglecting the social and environmental objectives of protecting national heritage and minimizing social inclusion (Cooper and Morpeth in Pixová and Sládek 2016). Other authors point towards corruption and the absence of a long-term plan to limit the risks of unrestrained development and the involvement of the capital gained through tax evasion and illegal US commodity trading in the gentrification projects (e.g., Karlín) (Cook 2010; Horák 2007). On the other hand, the newly introduced market mechanisms were considered the only useful mechanism for generating wealth and constructing an economically and socially just society (Sýkora and Bouzarovski 2012). These institutional developments led

to a reassessment of critical urban theories in the CEE context as related not only to the critique of neoliberalism but also to the critique of corrupted political institutions abusing power and serving private interests (Pixová 2018). Prague's story is not an aberration from other big CEE cities that began attempts to limit the power of developers and investors over their municipalities only in the 2000s (e.g., by creating master plans) (Stanilov in Jacobsson 2015).

Thirdly, urban movements present a different dynamic between reformism and radicality then that which is usually proposed by SMS or the anarchist perspective. The boundaries between both are not unambiguous, which leads, firstly, to the involvement the activists in municipal politics and, secondly, to cooperation between radical and reformists activists. To being with, a combination of an awakening civil society articulating urban issues as well as resistance to the domination of the free-market logic and the democratic deficit has led to a process whereby activists started to enter politics in order to open the opportunity structure (Pixová 2018, 2020; Pixová and Sládek 2016). This is especially appliable in the context of CEE and the Czech Republic, where municipal politics is not only closely allied with neoliberalism—a notion usually criticized by Western scholars—but is also a site of "local power abuse" (Pixová 2018: 681), of connection with private interests, and of non-transparent power relationships. Importantly, such municipalities function in a context of low trust towards activist politics in general (Horák 2007; Pixová 2018, 2020). Analytically, three different activist strategies for entering politics could be defined: (i) entering an existing political party (in the Czech Republic, mostly the Greens or Christian Democrats), (ii) register a new political party, or (iii) run as an independent civic candidate (Pixová 2020). Pixová claims that activists in politics usually lack a general critique of the capitalist order and have a locally-based, civil, and depoliticized understanding of justice. This might be drawn from the municipal political culture which is focused on pragmatic local problems rather than on ideology. Here, it is worth citing a municipal activist from Bertie Russel's research on municipal movements, where the difference between parliamentary and municipal politics is identified: "Traditional political parties are all about discussing ideologies and, you know, philosophies and big ideas, and we on the opposite wanted to start solving some of the problems" (Shameer, an activist from Beirut Madinati cited in Russell 2019: 999). However, we must critically assess Pixová's argument: An open critique of capitalism is not the only way activists are political. Moreover, the articulation of the left-wing critique is problematic in the CEE region because of its communist past—urban activists often chose to direct their claims towards local authorities or establish self-help communities rather than challenge ideology (Jacobsson and Korolczuk 2019).

This *activism in politics* remains *new municipalism* (though it is not articulated by activists in politics themselves), which is a novel way for social movements to answer the dilemma of institutionalization: it is about transforming local proximate institutions (municipalities) towards more democracy instead of grasping power or staying outside of the political game (Russell 2019). Circumstances when activists are perceived by politicians as illegitimate political actors (Horák 2007) has led them to enter local politics with aspirations of changing democratic structures on a local level, presented to them previously as a closed opportunity structure. Czech activism in politics is different from new municipal platforms, such as that of Barcelona en Comú or Zagreb je naš, but the logic behind it—the transformation of the political institutions closest to the citizens—is similar. However, it would be a trap to think these are only activists entering politics. Among the interviewees for this thesis, there are both local politicians who came from activism and those who came from the private sector (development) to open the window of opportunities for other investors and developers.

Furthermore, the ambiguous dynamic between reform and radicality can be seen through the example of cooperation between the reformists' (e.g., tenants') movements and radical movements (e.g., squatters) in Poland (Polanska and Piotrowski 2015). As the authors claim, this cooperation may have a transformative effect: radicals can influence the tenants' ideology, self-understanding, and repertoire of actions, and tenants gain material and physical help, as well as emotional support. Radical movements, on the other hand, can gain more legitimacy in their claims (not to mention more human resources, which they usually lack—see above). Both of the groups in this way appear stronger vis-à-vis municipal authorities, which leads, for example, to a shift in municipal politics towards bottom-up economic solutions and more openness towards dialogue. In essence, the balance between radical ideology and imagination and pragmatic cooperation on the local level alone, including the welcoming dynamics of the local environment, might lead to shifts in the local politics, which could be beneficial both for the radical and reformists groups.

Urban movements notably do not usually go the path of NGO-ization. One alternative is activism in politics, already mentioned above. In contrast with NGOs, urban movements are based on participation, authenticity, and politics in everyday life (for the citizens' attitude to CSOs and NGOs in the Czech Republic, see section 1.1): "Urban activists tend to be concerned with ordinary people's everyday problems, to be more able (and willing) to mobilize citizens around common interests, and to address the economic and social consequences of neoliberalism" (Jacobsson 2019: 126). This challenges the vision of an "organized society," but

also, and primarily, the methodological and theoretical apparatus through which sociologists devised this concept. As Jacobsson claims, the logic of urban activists is not based on protests that make headlines; thus, the protest event analysis—the methodological master frame of SMS and used in the Czech context as well—could not be used to study this type of activism, and it often escapes the lenses of social movements scholars. Moreover, urban activism in CEE is largely based on infrapolitics and building personal bonds (not *weak organizational ties* upon which transactional activism is based). And while this type of politics might seem fragmentizing for the civil society in CEE, urban activists in the region tend to generalize their critique and scale-up arenas for their political actions (Clément 2015).

The next section focuses on radical activism (squatting), the branch of activism that simultaneously has characteristics of a radical social movement, analyzed in the American tradition of SMS; characteristics of an anarchist movement, analyzed in the European tradition with reference to "theoretical-philosophical analysis" (Day 2006: 717); and of an urban movement, which might be considered a separate type of movement (Castells 1983; Jacobsson 2015).

1.4.1. Radical urban movements: Squatting in the Czech Republic

In this section I briefly introduce the history of social centers in the Czech Republic. Several authors work on this topic in the Czech Republic, mainly Arnošt Novák (2018, Novák and Kuřík 2019), Michaela Pixová (2012, 2013, Pixová and Novák 2016), Jiří Mertl (2015), and Vlastimil Růžička (2006), in addition to some master theses (Mertová 2002, Böhmová 2018, Galová 2017). After that, I will indicate the gaps in the research on social and urban movements in the Czech context, and, in the following chapter, I will introduce pragmatic sociology as a theoretical and analytical tool that is useful in filling these gaps and bringing a novel perspective to the study of social and urban movements in this context.

1.4.2. The Vibrant 1990s

The historical development of squatting and radical critique after the Velvet Revolution throughout the Czech Republic but mainly Prague—as Císař demonstrates, radical social movements in the Czech Republic are very centralized, and, indeed, the squatters' movement existed predominantly in Prague and Brno (Císař 2008; Novák and Kuřík 2019a)—could be described briefly by a golden age in the 1990s, a decline in the 2000s, and a renaissance that came with Klinika in 2014 (Pixová and Novák 2016). The golden age of squatting came to Prague from Berlin (Pixová and Novák 2016, Růžička 2006, Novák 2018). This was an era of enthusiasm where Prague became a melting pot of different subcultures with a rising numbers

of pubs, clubs, and freetekno events (Pixová 2012) following the Velvet Revolution. Pixová emphasizes the role of alternative spaces to the civil society of the time:

> Spaces which embed alternative, grassroots and marginal cultures and activities are crucial for urban environments that are democratic and socially just, and therefore play an important role in the existence and consolidation of a well-functioning democracy with a well-developed civil society and enforceable human rights. (Pixová 2012: 168)

The first squat Buďanka was evicted after its short existence, and the squatters moved to the Sochorka squat, which was the first publicly known squat in the Czech Republic (Novák 2018). Sochorka was repeatedly attacked by football fans and, after managing to get inside, police responders then evicted the squatters. After this eviction, there was a lack of space to meet, and anarchists from the Anarchist Federation used a park for this purpose. This changed with Ladronka in 1993. Ladronka is the main squat of the golden age, an age when people from rock and dissent backgrounds were close to power (according to Novák, that later changed to the uncompromising rule of state law and the logic of profit). However, Ladronka slowly declined. In 1998 and 1999, the activists took part in the organization of street parties in Prague; however, they did not do so as regards the protests against the IMF and World Bank in 2000. The same year, it was evicted without a court decision upon orders of city councilors from the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), according to Novák, because of moral panic concerning anarchists after the protests. Milada, a prominent squat in the decade to follow was occupied in 1998 and evicted in 2009 by a private security company after negotiations with the commissioner for human rights secured a different building for the squatters (known as Truhla, legal housing where squatters and tenants would unite against the landlord (Novák 2018)). As Mertl shows, the Milada eviction was presented with frames and metaphors of a conflict between squatters and the state but also of fear based on a threat to others, troublemaking and hygiene, and moral and health risks (2015). Both Milada and Ladronka were self-contained alternative projects that were more open to the subcultural public then the public in general (Pixová and Novák 2016). Milada, in the end, would be depoliticized in the sense that it served only as a place for living (Novák and Kuřík 2019a). There were also other types of squats beyond the political and subcultural. One was Medáci, a conservational squat aiming to protect worker's houses from the nineteenth century in the Prague 6 municipal district. Despite neighbors not considering the few occupied houses to be squats (Mertová 2002), they were also evicted upon orders of a city councilor from ODS and a Prague mayor, Pavel Bém. Another squat type was Zlatá Loď, which

was used for alternative living (Pixová and Novák 2016). Outside Prague there were squats such as Nová zahrada in Brno and Varšava in Trutnov (Mertová 2002). According to Růžička, participating in the occupations were approximately 100–150 people, 17–20 years in age, from the anarcho-autonomous and alternative environment. It was not a movement with a wide social base, but nonetheless 12 buildings were occupied in Prague; 5 in Brno; 6 in eastern Czech Republic; 1 in Teplice, Karlový Vary, Bohumín, and Plzeň, respectively; and 5 attempts were made in Slovakia. Because of the anti-fascist ideological orientation of some, they were attacked by fascists; this includes Buďánka, Ladronka, and Zelený dvor in Slovakia. In many cases of eviction, police were acting in an unlawful way, initiating the eviction and putting pressure on the owner following inducements from the anti-extremist office. Despite these unlawful actions, their criminal prosecution was just a formality that did not provide any particular results (Růžička 2006: 102).

The squats and other alternative spaces were varied in terms of their legality, goals, and levels of autonomy. As Pixová (2012) demonstrates, there are more options of interplay between an institutional order and alternative places: illegal and autonomous[2], such as Milada; legal and autonomous (for example, Truhla); semi-legal[3]; autonomous (Zlý čin, an occupied factory at the edge of the city, which was evicted after a large freetekno party); and semi-legal and neutral, such as a small but famous bar in one of the city parks that was protected by locals from the plans of investors. All these types of places construct, according to Pixová, an autonomous geography fruitful for the city. From the perspective of goals, there is a variety of squats that could be found in Prague: deprivation-based squatting, squatting for alternative housing (Zlatá loď), entrepreneurial (Ladronka, Klinika), and conservational squatting (Medáci, Cibulka) (Novák 2018). In total, the 1990–2004 period hosted around thirty squats in the Czech Republic serving as a solution to the housing problem, the need for subcultural space, and/or reflected an ethical principle—an alternative to mainstream society (Růžička 2006).

So far, this historical excursus allows for several theoretical conclusions. First is the difference between the radical and moderate urban activisms in terms of the historical period of their formation, as well as their reactiveness: The 1990s were a time when ownership relations were rather unclear, and thus there were a lot of empty buildings. At the same time, a demand for

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[2] "Autonomy" is defined by Pixová as independence from capitalist practices—they are places for creativity and experimentation, where people can live according to their principles (spaces of prefiguration).
[3] Authorized by an owner but without any legal status.

countercultural activity spaces existed (Navrátil 2020). This golden age of squatting did not wait to see the effects of neoliberal urban politics *in situ* as moderate urban initiatives of the 2000s did. These historical connections suggest that moderate urban initiatives are reactive, and radical activists are rather proactive in the way they react to capitalism's development in general and urban space development in particular. Moreover, squatting was influenced by an alternative culture that was brought from abroad in the 1990s, whereas the moderate initiatives are more pragmatic and less cultural in their activities. This difference does not exclude cultural influences, but one of the major topics is anti-development, a genesis of the material outcomes of the neoliberal shock doctrine in urban management (Pixová 2020).

The above-described development also supports the notion of mixed demands and types of critique in urban activism. Squatters used an opportunity which existed (empty buildings, unclear property relationships) to realize the desire for autonomy, self-management, creativeness, practices of living together—notions that are attributed to the new and the newest social movements. At the same time, their goals were clearly material (space), as were the nature of the possibilities that they had (empty buildings). With the ongoing commodification and financialization of urban space (including uneven development and an extreme rise in property prices) as well as the clarification of property relationships, one might predict that squats will have a limited part to play in the future, whereas the numbers of urban initiatives and pressure put by them on local governments will grow.

Thirdly, this historical excursus demonstrated the importance of municipal as opposed to state politics for urban activism. The 1990s were a period of nationally regulated capitalism, with ideas of a distinct Czech way, a return to Europe, and a social democratic vision of social issues on the level of parliamentary politics (Císař and Navrátil 2017). Meanwhile, on the Prague municipal level, privatization, deregulation, unrestrained development, and public space commodification was going on under the rule of ODS, a neoliberal party whose members were ordering the squat evictions. Thus, the importance of the scales of politics and the difference between them must be reconsidered in the case of urban activism.

Finally, the 1990s and 2000s saw the emergence of organized civil society—a growing number of NGOs accepting foreign funds and making transactional networks. In this context, radical urban activists are organized (as they build networks, albeit informal, on this level and in a way which cannot be grasped by SMS—see chapter 3) but uncivil, in the sense that many squatters' practices appear to activists as legitimate despite often being on the edge of legality and

definitely beyond Havel's general line of non-political thinking that is prominent in the Czech civil sphere. This is also a reason for police interventions and evictions—police guard the line between civility and uncivility, a line protected by the physical violence of the state. As was indicated above, the neglect of these urban developments, which Pixová describes as "vibrant" (2012), demonstrates the drawbacks of the American SMS framework when applied to the CEE urban context—through its means, it is not possible to grasp what is meaningful for the radical or urban activists. Other drawbacks of this theory, including its hidden political assumptions, are described in section 1.5.

1.4.3. The 2000s and 2010s: Oppression and a flash of possibilities

At the turn of millennium, decline came. The opportunity structure closed for the social movements, and local authorities in Prague fueled "protestophobia" (Císař 2008: 103, Růžička 2006). In 2000, during the IMF and World Bank summit, all schools were closed, citizens were told to leave the city so as to not be hurt during the protests, and twelve thousand policemen were present in Prague. The media reported on the event in a war-like manner: "War is going on in the streets of Prague," "severe fights, fire and blood," "What a Hussite battle looks like" (MF Dnes, cited in Kunzová 2002). Pixová points out that this was due to the development of the capitalist order, which became consolidated after years of relative freedom—Císař's globalized period of capitalism. The capitalist order finds its manifestation in the neoliberal urban order; urban space serves the goals of the market, it is commodified and privatized, rents are deregulated, which leads to increases in real estate prices and gentrification (2012). Again, as radical activism was repressed, moderate urban initiatives started to grow. The initiatives in general presented a more acceptable deradicalized critique associated with ideal of democratic participation rather than direct confrontation with the order as a whole instead of its parts—which raises a question as to the development of a systemic critique implemented within the capitalist order serving to consolidate this order, a question that is beyond the scope of this thesis (Boltanski 2011). The protests against NATO in 2002 were one of the last relatively visible events organized by anarchists (Novák 2018). Ladronka was evicted under the following conditions:

> [An] antagonistic society whose disapproval of squatting stemmed from its lack of experience of capitalism's contradictions, rejection of a socialism delegitimized by the former regime, and inability to critically address the ongoing consolidation of capitalism in its neoliberal form, i.e. adopting a globalized system characterized by deregulation, liberalization, and flexibilization of markets and trade, pervasive

privatization, strong private property rights, and the diminishing role of the state, especially its function in various areas of social provision. (Pixová and Novák 2016)

In 2009, according to Novák, the repression and politicization of squatting came: for the first time, police used both riot gear to evict squatters (Albertov) and a rhetoric of left extremism (2018). However, at the same time, the global economic crisis to some extent strengthened the left-wing scene in general, and alternative places again became important in the context of an oppressive neoliberal economy and its declared inclusiveness (Pixová 2012).

Several times squatters tried to draw attention to the problem of abandoned buildings in Prague. One of the most famous events was 2013's Memories of the Future in which several buildings were occupied to demonstrate their decay. The majority of the buildings occupied by the squatters in this case were owned either by the state or municipality rather than privately, and, from the very beginning of the occupation, the squatters were struggling for their legalization (ibid.)

In 2014, Klinika was occupied, creating "a flash of possibilities" (Novák 2018: 253)—the situation around squatting changed yet again. Some researchers explain it as a change from autonomy to post-autonomy (Böhmová 2018). Böhmová speaks of a change in strategy (using Facebook, wider medialization, the professionalization of plena, openness to people beyond the collective, cooperation with the Green Party on the individual level, and cooperation with the NGO sector on some issues), a transformation of tactics towards non-violent symbolic actions, a change in relations with the state (an agreement with the owner of the building, the Office for Government Representation in Property Affairs; resistance to the state; and a rhetoric of reform), clearer media rhetoric, and a stronger feeling of responsibility leading from partial dependency on public opinion and greater openness. Pixová and Novák list the change of tactics connected with Klinika: the choice to engage the oppositional Green Party in Prague 3's local district government, the submission of a project to the owner with credible initiators (teachers, artists, social workers), the prior cleaning of the building after use by drug addicts, its identification with a citizens' initiative instead of squatters, and the initial winning of "the council's official support, which had a symbolic significance for further negotiations with the authorities" (2016). Another important change was a change in media discourse. The media narrated the eviction of Milada in 2009 in such a way so as to create fear around the squatters' movement (Mertl 2015). Mertl, following Becker and Cohen, claims that fear in media production is usually depicted through the figure of the social deviant, not the criminal:

squatters from Milada were depicted as a threat to others, troublemakers who bother others, and unhygienic vandals (Mertl 2015). Conversely, Klinika was portrayed in a more positive vein even by mainstream media outlets such as *Mladá Fronta Dnes*: activists were presented as disciplined people creating free activities, a creative collective (however, the term "squatters" reappeared, replacing the "activists" term after the lease agreement expired) (Galová 2017).

As is demonstrated in this section, the research on Czech squats is very rich and detailed. However, it does not explain one important issue: what meanings do radical activists give to urban space? The meanings of urban space along with its function gives the space its form (Castells 1983)—the form of the present day city. Moreover, it takes for granted the conflicting meanings that institutional actors give urban space by naming them simply "capitalist," "neoliberal," "hegemonic," or the like. It does not explore the questions of what a neoliberal institutional order actually means, what today's capitalism looks like in urban space, and which tactics of domination are implemented and used by the hegemonic forces. This type of research takes the agency and rationality away from the institutional actors and portrays them as a monolithic order that, in all circumstances, has the same trajectory and logic. It also ignores the fact that this logic does not appear in the institutional order simply because it is capitalist or neoliberal. Rather, it is reflected in society in general, which means it is created by all of us (see chapter 3, "Empirical Part"). The next section explores this gap further and indicates other gaps in the current research on social movements in the Czech context.

1.5. Critical assessment of SMS, the prefigurative approach, and urban movement studies: Gaps in the current state of knowledge and research questions

In this section I critically assess the existing approaches to the study of radical urban activism. The first critical notion I propose here is the formal nature of SMS. Here, I emphasize the similarity between the form of networks that transactional activists create and capitalist forms. The second notion considers the political opportunity structure and hegemonic order in relation to their presupposed rather than analyzed nature in both SMS and the analysis of prefigurative politics as well as the absence of agency in these categories. The third notion regards the gap in the research on the meaning-making process in urban activism and the exclusion of a wide plurality of social actors involved in the process of urban meaning-making besides activists.

The fourth notion considers the analysis of prefigurative politics, which rarely includes conflicts about urban space and conflictual meanings that meet throughout the course of public disputes.

Firstly, SMS is a formalistic theory in a Simmelian sense—it considers forms rather than a deep analysis of the content of critique or its reasoning in connection with a broader social and historical context as well as the philosophical and political presuppositions of the movements' ideologies, with the exception of Císařs and Navrátil's research (2017). Some categories of SMS related to that of transactional activism are also related to the capitalist order. The transactional (a weak organizational tie) and project-oriented functioning of NGOs as a particular social form, as per Simmel (2009 [1908]), mirrors the social forms that are at the core of the new spirit of capitalism. This new, project-oriented spirit of capitalism, which arose at the end of the 1990s, is based on networked forms of organizations, flexibility, and mobility, meaning less security and less protection for wage earners (inter alia caused by a decrease in strong, lasting solidarity and membership-based trade unions) as well as new forms of exclusion (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). The focus on the form of movement instead of its content pulls attention away from the fact that a social, urban, and environmental critique existed in Eastern Europe before 1989 (Pickvance 2000), but was transformed after the 1990s into forms (NGOs supported by Western donors) that are more compatible with the capitalist order. Moreover, the reformist critique of NGOs is what strengthens the capitalist order (cf. Boltanski 2011). And despite project capitalism having a "new spirit," it is still based on forms of alienation which are essential to capitalism. One of these is alienation from others. The question that must be put is whether the weak organizational ties, instead of social bonds, is not a manifestation of this alienation from others, an alienation which substitutes the relationship between (local) people for relationships between project-oriented, foreign-financed organizations. In this light, the vanishing social dimension of critique that refers to class struggle in the agenda of the new movements makes more sense: the power of trade unions lies in their mass nature, which enables them a super majority, that in turn enables a successful strike—old social movements demanding economic justice depend on mass participation. A network as such, as Boltanski and Chiapello point out, is the ideology of the new spirit of capitalism in its institutional, organizational, and legal embeddedness. "Everything would be carried off in an endless stream of ephemeral associations which, given their capacity to put everything in communication, constantly distribute and dissolve whatever gels into them" claim the authors (2005: 105). Moreover, short-term projects and funding from foreign donors are never secure and stable. Thus, the project-focused nature of activism does not allow for the constant development of

stable structures that are needed to change the social order. As Císař and Vráblíková assert regarding women's EU-financed groups in the Czech Republic, "There is no guarantee that a group will continue to receive funding. Hence, women's groups may face financial uncertainty, and may find itself fully funded by the EU one day, and closing down their offices the next" (2010: 2018).

The topics grasped by the SMS conceptual apparatus and especially the category of "transactional activism" (see above) should be placed within the context of tension between democracy as a form of rule and liberalism as symbolic framework, as discussed by Chantal Mouffe (2000). Whereas liberalism stands for the defense of human rights, individual liberties, the separation of the public from the private, and the notion of a rule-of-law state, democracy emphasizes equality, popular sovereignty, and identity between the governed and those governing. Based on the topics articulated by the Czech transactional movements and by their form, one might claim that given this tension, transactional activists articulate a liberal as opposed to democratic position (however, one must be cautious about such a strict distinction). The tension between democracy with its popular participation and liberalism with its accent on rights, as promoted by advocacy organizations, is visible in what Ondřej Císař describes as a "cooptation debate" (Císař 2012). This debate, essentially deals with the question as to the criterion for "proper" democratization. Is it a mobilization of large numbers of people or an ability of advocacy-based organizations to carry through on norms (ecological and human rights) that are common in Western countries but not necessarily in CEE? The debate laconically and insightfully described by Císař seems to be insensitive to this conflict between democracy and liberalism, a conflict which defines the difference between the positions of sociologists.

What is missing from Mouffe's perspective is that such a liberal grammar of public disputes is susceptible to the implementation of an external logic that would solve a conflict of opinions—the major limit of autonomous democracy as described by Castoriadis (Castoriadis 1997). In Czech society, especially with regard to the urban order in the 1990s, this external logic was that of the free market, which in many cases substituted for discussions about the common good as regards urban space (e.g., development unburdened by political discussions and participation or issues of heritage protection (Horák 2007)). Another aspect of this external logic is an overwhelming accent on particular rights (e.g., property rights), which become uncontestable truths articulated by neoliberals in order to maintain the status quo and prevent agonistic public

disputes (Mouffe 2000). Struggling against these rules, thus, is an essence of autonomous democracy.

Secondly, the categories of transactional, radical, or other types of activism present themselves as forms of action described through resource mobilization categories and in relation to the political opportunity structures. The institutional system (political opportunity structure) is seen as fixed rather than dynamic. This type of research is indeed necessary; however, it raises ontological questions about the general organization of reality. On the one hand, it is a question of the multiplicity of realities in which a movement functions, which is deduced from the multiplicity of realities in which humans live (Thévenot 2007, 2014, 2019). On the other hand, it raises a question as to the reasoning behind the ontological presupposition which states that agency is attached to a movement, but not the social order (political opportunity structure). An institutional order seems to open and close windows of opportunities in a historical context; however, it general, SMS proposes a limited understanding of its dynamic nature. Concepts like prefiguration and the politics of the act move the research on social movements further in the direction of an analysis of the movements' critique rather than an analysis of form. And yet, it is formal from another perspective—it sees the institutional structure (articulated in this case as hegemony instead of political opportunity structure) as a fixed entity against or beyond which the struggle of the movement is directed. Even when Novák and Kuřík claim that they see the political opportunity structure as fragile and flexible, their research goes no further into an analysis of what exactly is fragile and flexible about it, nor how the actors within it think and justify their actions. As I demonstrate in the thesis, it is essential to analyze different dominant social actors based on the logics that are implemented in the institutions to which they are related. State employees interpret and create reality in different ways than municipal politicians. Municipal politicians in turn have different ways of making politics than state politicians. Thus, the scale of politics is important, but, essentially, I claim that the analytical categories of institutional social actors must not be rigidly predetermined (e.g., "hegemonic capitalist forces") but analyzed over the course of the research. As I demonstrate, neither state apparatus, nor politics can be simply generalized through the categories of "political opportunity structure" or "hegemony." Departments in the state bureaucracy and political institutions have particular reasonings, implemented, activated, and constantly changing understandings of justice that are referred to the fact that institutions "can exist only in the symbolic; they are impossible outside of a second-order symbolism; for each institution constitutes a particular symbolic network" (Castoriadis 1998: 75). An institutional order not only has functions (including functions for

the movement, e.g., opening/closing windows) but is also composed of different structures of power and domination, created and recreated through practices, discourses, meaning-making processes, and tests of reality performed within radical uncertainty (Boltanski 2011). In Czech sociology, neither an analysis based on the American SMS tradition nor the European tradition takes this into account. An agency-based understanding of the dominant order is one of the main ontological assumptions of this study (see below), which therefore allows for the detailed analysis of the processes whereby meanings are created. Moreover, in contrast with the formalist approach of SMS, this study focuses on the meaning-making processes of different social actors.

Thirdly, the difference between SMS and urban movements is that urban movements studies does not allow for the categorization of old and new based on demands, because the demand for space is always material. However, Czech research on urban movements does not go deep in exploring the meanings social actors give to urban space or the ways particular meanings and functions are justified. Urban meaning, understood as an assigned goal of a city by conflicting historical actors in a given time and space, as well as urban function (the means to perform goals assigned to each city in a given time and space) are the core phenomena on which urban movements research is focused (Castells 1983). Both of those, meanings and functions, create the urban form, the city we live in. The analysis of urban meanings, of conflicts over them, and of the meaning-making process of social actors other than the activists is missing from Czech urban movement studies. This is one of the inputs of this research: besides activists, it is focused on state employees and municipal politicians.

Fourthly, the analysis, based on conceptualizations of prefiguration and the politics of the act, is oriented towards the inner organization of movements. It does not analyze the conflicting meanings that different social actors articulate in public disputes. The interests and reasoning of particular groups are presupposed (neoliberalism, commodification of space, etc.) rather than actually explored. And while, indeed, the inner functioning of the movement seems to be an extremely important topic, especially with regard to prefigurative politics, an analysis based on it could barely explain which conflicting meanings this politics tries to alter. This study fills this gap through the analysis of various social actors participating in the conflict over urban space.

Based on this critique and on the case analyzed in this study—the public dispute over Klinika—I propose two sets of research questions. The first set is composed of empirical questions, and the second is theoretical:

1. How is the dispute about urban space constructed in the case of Klinika?

1.1. Who are the actors involved in the public dispute over the urban terrain?

1.2. What meanings do these actors give to urban space? Which justifications do they use when they justify their actions in the urban terrain? What are the grammars of these justifications? And what are the wider institutional logics from which they are coming?

1.3. What are the institutional order's tactics of domination? And what are the tactics of resistance?

2. What are the analytical benefits of using pragmatic sociology and the analysis of disputes for understanding the dynamics of resistance in an urban terrain in comparison with (both American and European) SMS traditions and urban movements studies?

2. The pragmatic sociology of critique: Ontology, epistemology, and methodology

This chapter is dedicated to the ontological, epistemological, and, finally, methodological assumptions of the study. In the first section, I introduce the main ontological assumptions of the pragmatic sociology of critique (hereinafter PSC): the uncertainty of reality, a focus on actors and actions (which challenges the concepts of political opportunity structure and hegemonic order), the critical capacity of critical actors and the position of sociologists towards critique, the non-normativity of critique, and finally, different realities in which humans are engaged in different ways. In the second section, I propose the conceptualization of the critical actors and the institutional actors—the two main sides in the disputes to be analyzed in this study. Finally, in the last section, I describe the justification analysis (JA) method and its main applications in current sociological research.

2.1. Ontology of the study: Pragmatic assumptions

In this section, I introduce the main ontological assumptions of the pragmatic sociology of critique—a program developed in France in the 1980s by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot.

These assumptions are fundamental to understanding the role of public disputes and the conceptualization of resistance and social movements on one side and institutional actors on the other. They are useful in analyzing the nature of disputes between both critical and institutional actors as well as inside an institutional order itself. At the end of each section, I point out the relevant questions and implications for this study that follow from these ontological assumptions.

2.1.1. Uncertain nature of reality

The central ontological assumption of PSC is the radical uncertainty of reality (Boltanski 2011). The problem of the decreasing certainty of social life is not characteristic only for Boltanski but generally for post-structuralist thinkers in philosophy and post-foundational political thinkers (for an overview, see Marchart 2007). Uncertainly is visible when one examines the discourses that dominate today's political space, penetrated as it is with different aspects of crisis (migration crisis, crisis of democracy, housing crisis, climate crisis, etc.). The democratic deficit on the local municipal level or intertwinement between the market and democratic institutions (Pixová 2018, 2020) also brings conditions of uncertainty in which different actors struggle with definitions of justice, according to which reality must be established. Post-foundational thinker Claude Lefort, for instance, speaks about the empty place of power in modern democracy, by which he means the position of power cannot be attached to anyone who embodies it (e.g., prince) and thus is subject to constant change and questioning. This leads to conflicts between those who dominate and those who resist domination. Democracy in this way loses its connection to law and the common good, which is constantly being redefined (Accetti 2018; Demelemestre 2012; Lefort 2007). The role of social movements is to make this contingency visible and, at the same time, to articulate agency, that is, power, which has a possibility to act upon others and with which negotiation is possible. In these conditions of uncertainty and unclear political foundations, indicating this subject itself becomes a political task. Judith Butler, another post-foundationalist thinker, coined the term "contingent foundations"—a plurality of hegemonic moves that seek to ground society without ever being entirely able to do so (Butler in Marchart 2007: 7). Thus, reality is a process of questing for its own basic principles. These principles are the matters of struggle between social movements and other social actors. This post-foundational nature of politics could be attached to new social movements, as Offe claims:

Finally, the "modern" character of the new social movements is underlined by their evident belief in the assumption that the course of history and society is "contingent" and hence can be created and changed by people and social forces determined to do so, rather than being determined by given "metasocial" (Touraine) principles of divine or natural order or, for that matter, by an inescapable road to catastrophe. This methodical assumption that things can be changed even allows, as a rule, for contingency concerning the areas and methods in which such change might be accomplished. (Offe 1985: 855)

Another theoretical parallel that helps to understand the role of uncertainty in PSC comes from the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Boltanski makes a distinction between *reality* and *the world* based on the Wittgensteinian distinction between symbolic forms and a state of affairs (Boltanski 2011). The world is interpreted by Boltanski as "immanence itself—what everyone finds herself caught in, immersed in the *flux of life*, but without necessarily causing the experiences rooted in it to attain the register of speech, still less that of deliberated action" (ibid.: 58; italics in orig.). World in other words is a range of experiences and, to put it bluntly, life itself "whose possibility had not been integrated into the pattern of reality." Existential tests (see below) spring from this level of human experience and are directed at institutionalized reality, and, as such, they are always transgressional.

Reality on the other hand is what is constructed by social institutions and through the qualifications institutions use to determine the worth that creates a person's status, the domination of an institutional order that the new social movements are fighting against. Reality is a set of norms, actions created and legitimated by institutions, what is said and what could possibly be said. However, institutions are not able to fully grasp the world from which critique appears, and thus, institutionalized and limited social reality is always one step behind the unlimited world. The gap between the real and the possible (what could appear from the flux of life) is essential for critical urban studies, for example, for Henry Lefebvre, who seeks to find the possibilities of the future in the ways reality is arranged in the present (Pinder 2013). This difference also reflects the gap between the present and the future as defined in prefigurative politics.

The difference between the reality and the world has a political interpretation in the thinking of post-foundational philosopher, Jacques Rancière. In his "Ten Theses on Politics" (2001), he discusses the notion of political difference. Political difference lies in a necessity to distinguish

between the police and politics. The police, according to Rancière, is a symbolic constitution of the social, a type of order in which functions, places, and ways of being fit each other (2001). It could be interpreted as the sum of all established categories and imaginaries which dictate to individuals how to behave (Davis 2010). Politics starts when the police order is shown to be arbitrary, when it is put to the test: "Politics exists as a deviation from this normal order of things" (Rancière 2001: 8)—by "this order" Rancière means the societal order that evolves from the government of birth to the government of wealth. Politics is connected to equality between individuals which is not limited by the categorizations that police implies. The principle of equality, which Rancière advocates, lies in recognition of the fact that anyone can occupy a different position from the one in fact occupied according to the stated order (Davis 2010). Furthermore, this equality presupposes the ability to speak, to possess, and to articulate language (logos) "appropriate for manifesting a community in the aesthesis of the just and unjust" (Rancière 2001: 10) as opposed to phōné, "appropriate only for expressing the feelings of pleasure and displeasure" (ibid.). This ability to speak presupposes the pragmatics of a speech act in which all sides of a dispute have the same legitimacy to judge the just or unjust character of reality and raise normative claims about it. The functioning of the politics is based on *an-archy*—a negation of a foundational ordering or principle (Davis 2010). This moment of negation, the alternation of one order for another (or to disorder) is what Rancière calls "dissensus"; politics according to him is "a presence of two worlds in one" (Rancière 2001: 9). When dissensus is possible, equality, which Dewey had in his mind—equality of opportunities (1998 [1937]) also presupposes opportunities to speak—is also possible.

Based on these notions, in this study I analyze social reality as based on a process of ordering and reassessment of reality conducted by a variety of actors, but not upon a solid structure in which some qualities are attached to some actors but not to others (social movements have agency, political opportunity structure is a context/barrier). To put it into Deleuzian words, Boltanski understands society as a dynamic process of encounters of distinct flows; some of them might be those of critique and others of confirmation (discussed in detail below). Both options of confirmation and critique cannot be absolute—society without a minimal presence of semantic order is chaos, and society with no interruption of this order is a totality (Boltanski 2011). This ontological presupposition implies that in this study I analyze social actors as seeking to find proof of the reality they consider to be just. None of these realities is given or predefined. On the contrary, it is created through the processes of justification and critique articulated in public disputes. It is ontologically unstable and undefinable.

2.1.2. Focus on actors and actions

A second important ontological assumption which emerges from the uncertain nature is a focus on the social actor that makes PSC a "social theory attentive to the dynamics of action" (Thévenot 2007: 410). Actors' properties, actions, and judgements are situational and are valid only with regard to experienced persons and things, interpretations, and relations:

> In this logic, people are inseparably "actors", who perform actions, and "interpreters", who elaborate social meaning by exchanging "signs", which are the form action takes when it is caught up in flows of relations on which people seek to confer meaning. From this angle, the seemingly most stable properties of individuals—for example, sex or profession—are themselves signs subject to interpretation in interaction. Rather than treating them as substantial properties, it is therefore appropriate to regard them as relational properties: it is in interaction, where they are subject to interpretation, that these qualities are invested with meanings; and meanings, depending on the relation as they do, vary as we pass from one relation to another. It is therefore not possible to define individuals, as in structuralist-influenced constructions, by a bundle of prosperities that derive mechanically from membership of groups, institutions, organizations, and so on.
>
> Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 147

Such an interpretation is based on the rejection of Bourdieu's concepts that focus on the properties of groups embedded in structures of fields. The Bourdieusian concept of habitus defined as static "structurally reproduced dispositions" (ibid.: 410) was particularly rejected. This move from the structure-embedded action mirrors the development of the concept of subject after May 1968:

> In so far as the latter [subject] is defined with reference to a self-consciousness and an essence that could be anything but the trace of the relations in which it has been caught up in the course of its displacement. It was likewise deployed in a critique of anything that could be condemned as a "fixed point" capable of acting as referent. This comprised, for example, the state, the family, churches and, more generally, all institutions; but also master thinkers, bureaucracies and traditions (because they are turned towards an origin treated as a fixed point); and eschatologies, religious

or political, because they make beings dependent upon an essence projected into the future.

<div align="right">Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 145</div>

Instead of stable dispositions, identities, social roles, or other characteristics which could be carried on by individuals from one situation to another, PSC focuses on relational analysis: the effects of behavior interpretation are derived from the situation and are based on the actors' evaluative generalizations. These generalizations play a crucial role in subordinating social life: they fix relationships between symbolic forms in a type of situation (semantics) and performances in a token situation (pragmatics), (Wagner 1999). Practically, this implies the questions that sociologists must put to themselves: What does it mean that the movements are radical or reformist? In the pragmatic vein, does it mean, that their actions are radical in some contexts but not in others, because the nature of actions is not retrieved from identity but from situations? Can institutional actors (bureaucrats and politicians) be radical in similar situations? Can institutions be old, new, and the newest? Do they create *weak transactional ties* between each other? And, if yes, why are weak transactional ties a special characteristic of social movements (but not the hegemonic order) in CEE? The above-described focus on actor and action enables questions to be posed that challenge existing theories about social movements and the civil sphere in CEE which could hardly be called post-foundational or post-structuralist as they are embedded in the presuppositions of political "fixed points" (e.g., a repertoire of actions) and structures (political opportunity structure, hegemony). Moreover, the focus on actor and action implies a further ontological notion: I analyze institutions as having an agency in this study, not as an outer, fixed structure or hegemony. This suggests the methodology—in-depth interviews with institutional actors where they explain the meanings of their actions.

2.1.3. Critical capacity of a social actor and the position of sociologists towards critical knowledge

The third important notion for an understanding of PSC is that it does not presuppose a critical exteriority like Marxists of the Kantian tradition (Bogusz 2014). Instead, it attributes critical capacity to an actor as well as to a scientist or philosopher, both of whom live and act in similar uncertain realities. PSC conceptualizes social actors as creative, empowered, and critical; they are not deceived by false consciousness (however, the dominant actors are similarly creative in their ability to produce new tests of reality in reaction to critique—see below). Critique is not external to them as critical sociologists would propose, legitimizing their own science:

For critical sociology then confronts the impossibility of capturing the necessarily normative dimensions that support its contribution to the denunciation of social injustices; this impossibility leads it inevitably to place undue emphasis on the externality of science in order to establish the legitimacy of its own practice.

Boltanski and Thévenot 2006: 11

It is important to emphasize this point. Through his critique of domination, Boltanski is aiming not only to develop a new theoretical approach but also to explain the position of a sociologist. Boltanski blames critical sociological approaches (mainly, Marxist) for their excessive ambition to unveil illusions "too powerful and too vague in character" when defining domination (Boltanski 2011: 20) and for their aspiration to tear off ideological masks that actors themselves cannot reflect. Critical sociology presupposes that there is a truthful truth behind those illusions which is accessible only to scientists. The scientists however describe hidden injustices without clarifying from which position they can define social phenomena as just or unjust; they just presuppose the presence of a norm. Boltanski criticizes this proposition, as it leads to an "endless regression when making an effort to get rid of any kind of impurity" (Boltanski 2008: 65 [translated by the author])—purifying the real world from the ideological taint might be an endless process. Furthermore, it seems that critical sociology privatized the discourse of truth by neglecting the actors' ability to evaluate the situations in which they find themselves. It states that the common knowledge of actors is not enough for the critical examination of social forms (Boltanski 2011). In their project Boltanski and Thévenot propose a different concept of agency: actors and sociologists alike can be sensitive to justice and injustice. That means that explanations provided by sociologists and social actors themselves are not so different: "Critique is no longer limited to sociology" (Wagner 1999: 346). Therefore Boltanski is speaking about the sociology of a critical society (Boltanski 2008: 73). This could be seen as a transformation in the role of an intellectual from a modern legislator involved in politics, with the power to define the rules of social reality, to a postmodern interpreter without political power, distanced from the state, and whose role is to communicate between the closed system of knowledge and the outer social world (Bauman 1992). The latter cannot unveil universal truth because in postmodernity this could not be definitively defined. Rather, it is an interpretative role, meaning a constant motion between the sociological knowledge and the knowledge of a social actor. Many years before Bauman, Dewey claimed in his *The Quest for*

Certainty that both philosophical knowledge and individual practical knowledge depend on human practice and seek to achieve the same goal, to secure values in society (Dewey 1998 [1929]). In a similar vein, Boltanski claims that "what was rejected in particular [by PSC] was the asymmetry between the sociologist enlightened by the light of his science and ordinary people sunk in illusion" (Boltanski 2011: 23).

Such an interpretation of a critical actor and the position of a sociologist in society leads to the following analytical considerations: Firstly, as the author of this study, I have no critical position as I would have had if I had based my ontology on Marxism (Pixová 2012) or notions of hegemony distinctive to the analysis of prefigurative politics (Day 2006; Novák and Kuřík 2019). A presupposed critique of either capitalism or the hegemonic order of the state-capitalist formation is not valid in PSC. Secondly, such an interpretation means that not only movements but other actors are critical, including the institutional actors who are critical in a reformist way. What is more, their functioning is based on the implementation of critique and creating the formations that reflect it—this is why capitalism is described as a creative order (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005)

2.1.4. PSC articulates an impossibility of finding a final principle of justice

Fourthly, while PSC works with orders of worth which represent justice for the actors involved, it (1) itself does not contain a presupposition of justice or norm and (2) does not claim that one norm of justice is possible (e.g., in comparison with Marxist theories).

Firstly, the principles of justice have a normative connotation in PSC; they give meaning to the actions of individuals and enable basic agreement about the nature of situations. They play semantic and pragmatic roles. They enable individuals to evaluate situations, to engage in classifications (upon which justifications are based), and to denounce injustice. However, their multiplicity itself demonstrates that there may be no possible final agreement on the way reality is constructed—there may be no final norm. Their multiplicity cannot be reduced to one common good; moreover, the same common good could be interpreted differently in different societies (Thévenot and Moody 2000) and different historical circumstances.

Boltanski and Chiapello in *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2005) demonstrate how the difference between meanings with which managers in organizations endow their actions corresponds with changes in the development of capitalist ideology, from bureaucratic and objective-oriented in the 1960s to creative and project-oriented in the 1990s. Both regimes are justified: they fix the

relationships between the symbolic forms of the bureaucratic and connexionist (based on the ability to create a project) world to the reality of firms, they create hierarchy between top managers and other cadres, and they dictate how to use objects—the office becoming an open space is a good example of spatial change. None of these worlds presuppose the existence of a norm, an exterior critical position of a scientist, or a belief that actors are acting under the veil of unconsciousness. For the ontology of this study, such an understanding of justice means that justice articulated either by the social movement or institutional actors cannot be a norm for societal functioning in general.

Secondly, what follows from the above-described understanding of justice is that a social scientist alone cannot presuppose a norm of justice that would have a normative character. This is the difference between PSC and other theories that presuppose the existence of a norm (the sociology of critique versus critical sociology). For example, these are branches of Marxism that articulate the historical necessity of a just future and of critical geography that condemn neoliberal urbanism and propose societal organization based on, for instance, urban commons instead. In comparison with normative theories, PSC sees its task as grasping the changing and challenged norms of justice in society with full consideration that none of them may be generalized, final, or just.

2.1.5. Justifiable action and other regimes of engagements

The final crucial notion is a connection between an individual and a situation which Thévenot calls engagement (2007). Thévenot distinguishes between three formats of engagement: familiar engagement, engagement in a plan, and engagement in justification (ibid.). This distinction is made on the basis of an individual's knowledge of reality—familiar engagement is with the well-known, close, and comfortable reality, whereas engagement with justification happens with the least known and least certain reality, a reality that is in a process of constant redefinition.

When individuals are engaged with familiarity, they feel themselves at ease. The dynamic of this regime depends on local and personal clues which are not available to the unfamiliar observer (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). When speaking about this regime, Thévenot speaks about "common places" where affinity between humans is built (Thévenot 2014). Common places do not necessarily mean physical spaces, they are also spaces of sharing experience and the genesis of commonality. There are spaces where personhood is dialogized and intersubjectivity emerges in the course of communication, the sharing of emotions, and the

building of commonality. "In such a *locus communis,* various personal expressions find a common ground to communicate deep concerns, attachments and feelings" (Thévenot 2014: 20; italics in orig.). In this manner, Karine Clément argues that picket lines play an important role for urban movements as common places because they create connections between people, which in turn might lead to a diffusion of the activist attitude (demonstrating the possibility of the activist attitude to ordinary people) and the involvement of new individuals (Clément 2015). This format of engagement is especially important for the study of activism and, generally, the civil sphere in CEE. It is due to this reason that, according to previous research, there is a low level of trust in the public sector and formal institutions within CEE, and thus, solidarity, social capital (building new personal ties), the informal economy, infrapolitics, and intersubjectivity gain importance (Clément 2015; Eurobarometer 2021; Jacobsson and Korolczuk 2019; Mihaylova 2005; Williams and Horodnic 2015). Contrary to the previous findings about organized civil society, the focus on this regime of engagement unveils distinct layers of politics and reinterprets actions (e.g., yoga lectures) as having political meaning and as playing a role in the construction of active citizenship (Jacobsson 2015; Jacobsson and Korolczuk 2019).

Engagement in a plan requires an instrumental and functional understanding of one's surroundings: the meaning of both material objects and nonmaterial ideas, values, and so on are defined by the actor and then result in appropriate behavior. The reality here is understood as a means to achieve one goal or another (Thévenot 2007). The strategies of the social movements and institutional actors are analyzed in this work as being based on this regime of engagement. Importantly, some authors interpret prefiguration in strategic terms with regard to its role in the reproduction, mobilization, and coordination of the movements (Yates 2020). Contrary to this research, in the current study I do not presuppose any concept that would define a priori the strategy of the movement. Strategic action, as well as any other action in PSC in this study, is defined as situation based.

The third type of engagement is a regime of justifiable action. This format of engagement is oriented towards a public order (public engagement). Analysis of the movement's demands and other public utterances refers to this type of engagement. In this type, individuals are acting within the least familiar situations, and their words and deeds should be valid to third parties, a generalized other—especially important for social movements seeking public support for their claims. Recognition from a third party brings legitimacy to the claims of actors and, at the same time, puts more demands on the generalizations they use (equivalences—in orig. Thévenot 2007), which implies a dynamic of critique and justification. Assessments of the actors are

oriented towards a public order, and therefore, the sense of justice they apply should be common to others: public qualifications are used to criticize and justify, and those qualifications fit into constructions of the common good (Thevenot 2007: 415). Common goods are defined as market competition, industrial efficiency, public renown, civic solidarity, domestic trust, inspiration (Botanski and Thévenot 2006), the ability to create a network (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), and an environmental polity (Moody and Thévenot 2000). Despite Boltanski and Thévenot deriving concepts of the common good from the work of particular philosophers and empirically prove that these six orders of justice have qualities of justice principles shared in social groups; in *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, Boltanski argues that the number of justifications and polities based on them is not limited and might be extended (2005). The most visible moment of engagement in justification is public dispute, where different notions of justice clash with each other (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006; Chateauraynau 2018; Chateauraynaud 2016; Thévenot, Moody, and Lafaye 2000). A public dispute about urban space where particular definitions regarding urban justice are involved (cf. Soja 2010) is analyzed in this study.

The notion of engagement helps this study to include politics-making on different levels of reality. The politics of social movements has a familiar, strategic, and public character as does the functioning of Rancièreian police. Instead of claiming that one or another dimension of politics (e.g., public demands or infrapolitics) is more important than another, the study looks at three different dimensions that are in dynamic relationships with each other. The study also considers the fact that not only activists but institutional actors are also embedded in this ontology of multiplicity of realities.

2.2. Epistemological assumptions of the study: Resistance to domination (critical actors) and the dominant order (institutions)

In the following section I address the epistemological problem of how to explore non-institutional critical actors and an institutional order through the means of pragmatic sociology so that it reflects the critique of social movement studies as well as the analysis of prefigurative politics and urban studies. Instead of the forms of collective behavior, I propose investigating tests of the institutional order and alternative meanings that social actors give to urban space through all three levels of engagement. However, it is not just social movements that produce the meanings of urban space, institutional actors are also involved in the process of meaning-making on these three levels. What is more, they are also critical. In what follows, I will clarify

the distinction between the critical actors and the institutional order based on the types of tests they apply in order to prove which elements of the world are organized in reality. In the last section, I discuss the question of domination.

2.2.1. Critical actors are those who test reality from the outside

Due to the uncertain and dynamic nature of reality, there is a need for it to be constantly confirmed or challenged. Operations which serve this goal take the form of tests in PSC. The concept of tests can be found in Bruno Latour's theory, Algirdas Greimas's narratology, and John Dewey's elaboration on the experimental nature of democracy (Quéré and Terzi 2014, Bogusz 2014). In the following paragraphs I briefly introduce the theories of these three authors and elaborate on the types of tests in PSC.

Firstly, tests are essential for the construction of reality. According to Bruno Latour, actors and their competencies are created through trials of strength and weakness (Latour 1988). One of the famous examples of this thinking is making bacteria visible by creating theatric conditions of scientific experiments in which bacteria could perform their agency and through this become real. According to Latour, there is no other actor than the one who is created during the course of trials. Secondly, tests can have a different role in reality creation. In narrative texts, which include but are not limited to literature, Algirdas Greimas speaks of different forms of trials of strength. By passing the tests, heroes prove their competences and skills and also make the plot function the way it has to function (Beetz 2013). These tests can be qualifying, decisive, and glorifying. Passing a qualifying test endows the subject with a certain quality and examines whether the hero has this quality or not. The second type, a decisive test, means "bringing about the conjunction of the subject with the sought-for object of value" (Greimas in Beetz 2013: 10): it takes a form of action that approves qualities acquired in the previous test. The third type of test, a glorification test, examines whether a subject is recognized by other actors as having certain qualities (e.g., strength, patience, bravery). For instance, in a fairy tale, the princess has to pass through a dark forest in order to gain know-how (qualifying test), she frees a prince (decisive test), and after, she is recognized as a queen (glorifying test). Finally, tests play an essential role for democracy, which has an experimental nature (Bogusz 2014). Democracy, according to Dewey, is a creative process of experience (1939) based on the uncertainty that embraces the necessity to test established forms of life, to formulate a reflective inquiry that can alter the established meanings of things and hence demonstrate a judgment of what activity will work (Bogusz 2014). Democracy, moreover, is not a goal, but a means. It is a process of

its creation, an action itself combined with "the faith that the process of experience is more important than any special result attained" (Dewey 1998 [1939]: 343)—it is "a personal way of individual life" (ibid.: 341). This lived experience causes other experiences, which create an equal, according to Dewey, society: "Democracy is belief in the ability of human experience to generate the aims and methods by which further experience will grow in ordered richness" (ibid.: 343). By this Dewey demonstrates the integrity of knowledge and action, the importance of belief, and the means to reach it, which is symptomatic both of pragmatism and democracy, as the author assumes. Boltanski reinterprets this idea by saying that the ontological nature of institutions necessarily leads to the genesis of critique, "which is no doubt also present, but to different degrees and in different forms, in all societies" (2011: 98).

The examples of these three authors help to understand the role that tests have in PSC. Tests of different types create and prove reality and play an essential role in the operations of confirmation and critique of the institutional order. Boltanski makes a distinction between truth tests, reality tests, and existential tests (2011). Truth tests play a role in the process of confirming reality and stabilizing relationships between the symbolic forms and the state of affairs (e.g., "the Republic is Republic"). For these tests to properly function, repetition and tautology is important—they are conducted based on a pre-given formula and obtain no information, they are "the antipodes of argument" (ibid.: 104). The role of these tests is "*to make visible the fact that there is a norm*" (ibid.; italics in orig.). Often truth tests have a ritual form through which the future is proven: "Truth tests (*épreuves de vérité*) are 'symbolic' in the sense that, on the basis of interpretations, they aim to understand 'a universe of signs' shared by a community" (Susen 2014: 187).

Reality tests (*épreuves de réalité*) might present cases of both confirmation and reformist critique. As regards confirmation, reality tests are "validating … a reality that is already constructed" (Boltanski 2011: 106). Here, reality tests might question the qualities of persons based on the given test formations. In the case of critical operations, reality tests can be disruptive and question the way people characterize what is happening. They appear in the metapragmatic register of action. This register is characterized by high reflexivity, where the "the process of doing … no longer seems self-evident" (ibid.: 67). In this register, reality tests are aimed at questioning *the process* whereby states of worth are attached to persons and at testing the orders of worth themselves by "challeng[ing] the illegitimate fashion in which some test is applied in a particular situation" (Boltanski 2011: 107).

Other authors, such as Chantal Mouffe, interpret these tests as pure reformism (the state is understood to be a natural institution) and radical reformism (the main principles of legitimacy are accepted, but there is a desire to challenge the hegemonic formation) (Mouffe 2018). Pure reformism presents a case where the statement is "the State is the State." While inside the state there might be a reform, the key procedure of this "reformist logic" is confirmation of the existing hegemonic formation. Radical reformism, as with a reality test, questions the attribution of particular qualities (power) to a particular group of people. This type of critique is based on a minimum incongruity between the real and the world. Moreover, the truth tests are inherent to the institutional order as are some types of reality tests. After all, the new spirit of capitalism is about the evolution of certain justifications, the legitimacy of which is tested by new types of tests imposed by the artistic critique following 1968 (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). But the new tests implemented in the capitalist order do not challenge it but rather make it stronger. Following Rancière, in this study, I interpret these types of tests as being attached to the self-referential order of police.

The third type of test are existential tests that "undo … the generally accepted relations between symbolic forms and state of affairs" by "drawing from the world new examples that endanger the completeness of established definitions and cast doubt on the universal character of confirmed relations" (Boltanski 2011: 109). In the course of existential tests, the semantic order of the tested reality is challenged by another, alien semantic order: "Existential tests (*épreuves existentielles*) are 'experienced' in the sense that they face up to 'the incompleteness of reality and even its contingency, by drawing examples from the flux of life' and by exposing manifestations of the fundamental ambiguity pervading all social constructions, which, in their totality, form the ensemble of reality" (Susen 2014: 187). In this case, Boltanski is speaking about radical critique, a critique which does not promise a reform of the system but embraces the alternative to it (2011). To articulate this type of critique, the critical actors need to speak from the position of a temporary zone of ontological autonomy, which means that its subjectivity is not created by the institutional order (ibid.) Mouffe refers to this type of left-wing politics as revolutionary politics—the state has to be abolished (Mouffe 2018). In comparison with Mouffe, Boltanski's idea of a test is situation-based, while what Mouffe refers to is an ideology that guides political decisions and much less an endeavor to grasp the pragmatics of a social act. In this study, following Rancière, I interpret existential tests in reference to politics.

2.2.2. The question of order: A conceptualization of institutions

In comparison with the definition of the critical actor, the concept of institutions in pragmatic sociology lacks clear definition, conceptual accuracy, methodological rigor, and even evidence-based criteria that prove the existence of institutions (Susen 2014). Boltanski acknowledges the fact that defining institutions is a tricky problem for sociology, especially for pragmatism captivated by the aesthetics of action in the here-and-now and situated judgement (2011). Despite rich investigation of the functions of institutions and the contradictions embedded in them, PSC lacks an explanation of how to study the institutional order, which creates an obstacle in using this theory. The epistemological hitch lies in the fact that while conceptualizing the tests that the institutional order must pass so as to be real, a type of violence and domination (semantic), PSC does not actually say what institutions are. In such a manner, it could be everything from greetings to parliaments. In particular, in the course of the data analysis for this study, I found PSC especially inefficient for the operationalization of institutions with regard to the differences in their scope, qualities, and functions. The practical questions that I encountered in the course of the study ranged from the way PSC grasps the difference between the local, district, regional, and parliamentary politics to sufficient explanations of the difference in the institutional organization between bureaucracy and politics. PSC presents institutional order as a monolithic entity; however, it is obvious that civil servants, politicians (of a different scope), police, mass media, and other institutions have different functions with respect to reality creation. They apply different sets of tests, and their inner logic is different. PSC did not provide means that were sufficient at all for grasping these differences—this is the reason why in the course of the study I brought into play the concept of arenas where the disputes are happening, in compliance with the multi-institutional approach.

In order to overcome the above-described obstacles, I complement Boltanski's interpretation with the notions of other authors exploring the nature of institutions. In this subchapter, I will first speak about the dialectic between institutions and critique and about disputes being the most appropriate matter for sociological analysis. Then I emphasize the difference between power and domination. In the following paragraphs, I point out the symbolic and semantic nature of domination and the role of social imaginary significations in the construction of institutional order. In the last two paragraphs, I discuss the importance of a multi-institutional approach, which makes a distinction between different types of institutions. I finish the section by stating that institutions are organized in networks, which means that they mutually influence each other on the symbolic level.

To begin with, radical critique makes sense only with reference to the institutional order: "Critique is therefore considered in its dialogical relationship with the institutions it is arrayed against" (Boltanski 2011: xi). In this study, an institutional order, as was mentioned above, is understood in the form of police (Rancière 2001). Police, according to Rancière, allows for the participation of some parts and excludes others. It defines the ways of partaking not only by making a distinction between categories but, first and foremost, by defining the partition of community, which makes these distinctions thinkable. Police in the form of an institutionalized reality is a semantic order which reproduces itself and its subjects. Dissensus is directed against it by stating the equality among parts that have been created as unequal by the police. Dissensus, critique, and radical disagreement on the one hand, and police, institutional order, and an effort towards stable categorization and a docile citizenry on the other are mutually constitutive entities which are organized in dynamic societal processes and are examined in this study as such. There is no dissensus without police, and vice versa, there is no critique without an order to be criticized and put to the test, the moment both could be studied. Coming back to Habermas, we could possibly furthermore state that sociology is a science of crisis *par excellence* (1984 [1981]).

Secondly, institutions are both fragile and in need of constant self-affirmation on the one hand and dominant social actors on the other (Boltanski 2011). Here, it is important to point out the difference between domination and power (Botlanski 2007a, 2007b, 2011). Domination presupposes the maintenance of asymmetrical relations, whereas power enables action:

> We need to draw a distinction between the concept of "power" and the concept of "domination". In the most general sense, the former designates the capacity to do something, whereas the latter describes the capacity to impose oneself upon another entity —that is, upon an individual or collective actor—with the aim of making them do something in a particular way. (Susen 2014: 177)

Thus, while social movements are not dominant, they still have power. Excluding power from an analysis or mixing the two categories together is a disempowering move towards the resisting actors who believe that they have a capacity to do things (otherwise, they would not be acting).

Domination of the institutional order does not necessary involve the threat of direct force or a monopoly on violence (Weber 2009 [1919]). A critique of approaches that conceive of the state as the constant possibility of violence is key to understanding Boltanski and Chiapello's new

spirit of capitalism. The authors claim that there are modes of domination which do not necessarily involve the use or threat of physical violence and have a rather semantic and symbolic character. Violence is considered to be a means of protecting the dominant symbolic order (Graeber 2015). I put symbolic and semantic domination at the core of the current analysis and do not go deep into an exploration of the Weberian notion of domination by threat of violence (in this case, police repression)—an elaboration behind the reasoning for this choice can be found in the empirical chapter. To summarize then, while the police are the usual suspect of repression in urban struggles, in the case of Klinika, this did not produce a sufficient range of data for analysis—police played a moderate role in the public disputes concerning the urban space. Besides other things, this is because Klinika did not function beyond civility. On the contrary, it made attempts to enter the field of civility by exposing itself to a set of tests proving its worth in the civic, industrial, and market orders. Additionally, to draw on Graeber's definition, I am interested in the symbolic order itself and not in the executive forces that are guarding it.

One of the most prominent authors who developed the notion of symbolic violence is Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu speaks about an intimate relation between the state and symbolic violence—the power to categorize social reality (2014). This power, to a large extent, is based on the compliance of the dominated with their domination. Symbolic violence exercised by the state according to Bourdieu lies in the fact that it usurps the right to create categories and defines the public, the official (such as the official status of a citizen), justice ("symbolic violence of justice" (ibid.: 144)), and forms of human thought, and in so doing remains invisible:

> The constraint that the state exercises on our most intimate thoughts, the fact that our thinking can be possessed by the state, constitutes an exemplary case of the "invisible" coercions that are exercised with the complicity of those subject to them. That is what I call symbolic violence or symbolic domination, that is, forms of constraint that rely on unconscious harmony between objective structures and mental structures.
>
> Bourdieu 2014: 151

Semantic domination, coined by Boltanski (2011), develops these ideas further in the ontological framework of the pragmatic sociology of critique. The institutional order not only imposes categories and social imaginary significations but also plays an essential role in making

connections between the world and reality by means of tests to which institutions have privileged access (mainly particular formats of reality and truth tests which are implemented in the institutional order). Through semantic domination, institutions keep their role in the creation of reality imposed on others. Semantic domination, as Boltanski points out, can be seen in a twofold way. On the one hand, it is connected with the illusion of a constant change (as was demonstrated in *The New Spirit of Capitalism*—capitalism is an order of domination through change). A dominant group owns the devices of constant change (test formats), and they become its asset—devices of change are simultaneously devices of domination and of maintaining asymmetries in society. The dominant group can change the format of tests in order to make it more difficult and complex on the one hand, and finer in terms of classifications of people on the other. Inversely, the dominant group can also change the aspect of reality that is subjected to a test, which Boltanski calls the dislocation of reality (Boltanski 2007a, Browne 2014). By doing so, it performs what Boltanski calls a double reification, the removal of the will of the people from the process of social change, which instead is explained by necessity, time, crisis, and so on (ibid.)—this process is also conceived through the concept of depoliticization (Burnham 2001). Another important characteristic is that a group of people involved in societal administration give themselves an advantage by owning the devices that help them to maintain asymmetry in society (Boltanski 2007a).

Importantly, test formats that bring the illusion of constant change are reformist; thus, they do not essentially change the logic implemented in the institutional order. Radical change and emancipation is possible only with the means of radical critique coming from the world (Boltanski 2011). Such radical change however meets obstacles. According to Castoriadis, the obstacle to this change is believing that institutions are created by some other force than society itself or that there is some type of transcendent justice (e.g., the idea that a free market is an objective mechanism of justice not created by the society and then presented as a disembedded economic law—the logic that guides neoliberal urbanism instead of political will as it was described in the introduction based on Mayer's work) (Castoriadis 1997). According to Bourdieu, this is a consensus on the mutual belief in a "well-founded illusion" of the state (Bourdieu 2018: 10). The illusionary nature of institutions, their historical contingency, and their ontological fragility opens a path towards critique—a questioning of the order—which is an essence of politics and philosophy.

Castoriadis emphasizes a similar symbolic role of institutions by pointing out the difference between the functional role and the symbolic role of institutions in society (Castoriadis 1998).

An institutional order as such is a result of instituting a social imaginary of society, meaning that it is the society which creates its own world of significations embedded in institutions. Thus, laws are not given by a transcendental God, historical necessity, or free market logic, it is the society that creates institutions. Awareness of this fact lies at the heart of the logic of radical democracy (Castoriadis 1990, 1999). The institutional order cannot be explained merely through a functionalist logic, which is important but is far from being sufficient in explaining the societal role of institutions (Castoriadis 1998). Rather, the institutional order develops based on social imaginary significations, which do not have a direct connection to reality or to pure logic or reason (e.g., the free market is a signification created by economic institutions, not vice versa, just like God was created by the Church). An instituted social imaginary crystalizes through the solidification of institutions and social imaginary significations that are inserted into the social life by the institutional order. Instituted social relations are presented as "universal, symbolized and sanctioned ways of doing things" (Castoriadis 1999: 124). Material and symbolic domination of the institutional order is interconnected. For example, private property represents both a symbolic relation and a social relation (Friedland and Alford 1991) that is imposed by the state in liberal democracies. Thus, private property is a material source of domination (as Marxists would claim), but it is also an instituted signification to which society attaches symbolic value, for example, freedom (as liberals would claim). Two major social imaginary significations of modernity, the rational mastery of capitalism and the autonomy of democracy, are in constant tension. Capitalist rationality tends to replace autonomous democracy which, in turn, questions it (Straume 2014).

Thirdly, I accept the critique stating that in many cases the state is analyzed as a single dominant entity (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Friedland and Alford 1991). This assumption raises questions not only at a theoretical level but also at the level of common sense. Are a politician and a state official dominant in the same way? Whereas the first one has a mandate embodying the will of others in a civil polity, the second follows bureaucratic rules and is appointed internally. This is especially important when social requirements of justice are considered. The work of politicians and state bureaucrats is regulated by different laws (if we accept that the law represents the imagination of justice). This brings about different orders of justice, such as popular sovereignty for politicians and a depoliticized duty and loyalty to the state for state bureaucrats. The multi-institutional approach proposed by Friedland and Alford addresses this issue by observing a distinction between institutional arenas (such as democracy and bureaucracy) that have different limits, instruments, and structures of power, and therefore,

different modes of domination. Actors acting in different arenas might be allies of critical actors, their adversaries, or an attentive but not directly involved audience (Kriesi 2006).

Finally, despite the fact that institutions are organized according to different requirements of justice, they are intertwined in the symbolic networks. This does not allow for a clear separation between the social imaginary significations embedded in different institutions to be made. Take, for instance, Castoriadis's example of capitalist bureaucracy and bureaucratic capitalism: The norm of market efficiency (orientation towards profit) and the norm of bureaucratic hierarchy can be found both in the state bureaucracy and private profit-making corporations. Thus, as Castoriadis points out, it is impossible to make a clear distinction between the public and the private sphere. What civil servants are governing is supposed to be public; however, it becomes private in a particular sense. Authors like Castoriadis and Graeber criticize bureaucracy because it produces nonsense and irresponsibility though hierarchy, instrumentalization and alienation (Graeber 2015; Murphy 2014). In this research, I show that, as opposed to producing nonsense, the bureaucracy absorbs the significations produced by institutional politics, and thus, it is politicized, connected with politics in symbolic networks and sharing significations embedded in it instead of being directly influenced by politicians. Graeber moreover claims that bureaucracy functions on a principle of domination based on hierarchy, where those on top create the structures of imagination and those on the bottom do interpretative labor. Conversely, in this study, I show that all the actors do interpretative labor when participating in public disputes since they use law as a particular language game to be mastered according to their interests. Interpretative labor thus could be a matter of hierarchy, but it is also a matter given by the requirements of the arena where the disputes about urban space are happening. In this arena, law and bureaucratic rules play an important role. It is mastery of these interpretations that can bring victory.

2.3. The methodology: Justification analysis

The methodology of this study is based on the combination of an exploration of different test formats that challenge or confirm the reality (which is also an epistemological notion) and justification analysis (JA). In this section I introduce the justification analysis methodology by first speaking about the role of justifications, their general character, and the plurality of possible justifications. In the section that follows, I will introduce the orders of worth, the methodological toolbox for the analysis of public disputes, and examples of research that use JA.

2.3.1. Justifications: General and plural

Actors not only test reality and undergo tests themselves, but they also justify why they do so on the basis of moral judgements and evaluations of situations. These judgements and evaluations (of the meaning of urban space and spatial justice) are analyzed in this study. The main steps in a justification analysis (hereinafter JA) were presented by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006), Boltanski (2007), Thévenot and Moody (2000), and Thévenot, Moody, and Lafaye (2000). Through the means of justifications, individuals can evaluate lived situations as just or unjust, define justice in a particular situation, formulate demands towards the restoration of order, and find a basis for the articulation of collective interests and further public discussion (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). While a public dispute is happening—the moment the reality is being put to the test—justifications play a crucial role because they generalize the situation and bring moral grounding to a possible solution. The possible solution might take the form of compromise as the general principles of justice are intertwining—in this way the rights of workers represent a compromise between industrial and civic polities (Boltanski, Thvenot 2006). However, it can also be an exclusion of one or another principle. JA is a strategy of analysis that focuses not on the transcendental understanding of justice, but on interpretations of plural orders of justice which consider the arrangements of situations (material, social, institutional, legal, and other elements which actors consider to be facts appropriate for utilization in the course of argumentation as evidence (ibid.). JA understands justice to be a shared social phenomenon: justifications are not merely individual cognitive constructions applied in action, they are consolidated in social life. As Thévenot, Moody, and Lafaye claim, justifications are general:

> Our analysis explores the ways in which […] disputants attempt to defend their positions through various types of "generalized" arguments—that is, arguments which make some claim to general applicability by reference to different sorts of values, principles, or models for judging what is good, worthy, and right.
>
> 2000: 236

Due to the variety of material and social arrangements, there can be no exclusive principle of justice applied in lived situations—there are always differences in interest when applying strategies of using justifications (Thévenot and Moody 2000). Boltanski and Thévenot propose a justification analysis based on six principles of common good taken from the works of St. Augustin, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Henri de Saint-

Simon, and Adam Smith: inspiration, personal relations and dependency, fame and honor, solidarity among citizens, efficiency, and fair price. Later Thévenot added an ecological, green worth (ibid.) and Boltanski, the worth of network (2007). Boltanski also claimed that the number of polity models based on different common goods could be extended (ibid.). These polities have a particular grammar which are explained in the next section. But before discussing them, it is important to note that the character of law, which is itself a world of argumentation, is not free from interpretation.

2.3.2. Orders of worth

Justifications in public disputes are based on the six orders of worth (inspired, domestic, the polity of fame, civic, industrial, and market) that represent six basic principles of common good to which humans refer (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006) (see table 1). The common good represents a general interest (in contrast to particular or individual) and could be interpreted differently in different cultures (Thévenot, Moody 2000). These principles of common good are tested, challenged, and proved by particular types of tests. In such a manner, their worth in the civic order is tested by tests of solidarity and equality, whereas the worth of a good price is tested by market competitiveness. Based on the ontological notion of the uncertainty of reality, the articulated principles of the common good must be proved in order to become real. In a civic order, proof has a formal nature (e.g., official documents, following Bourdieu, are those that are produced by the state (Bourdieu 2014)), and in the market order, this character is monetary. The orders of worth are situated in the real world of people (pragmatics of action), and thus, material objects might play an essential role in particular moments: they are "instruments or devices for determining worth" (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006: 130). Material things and people are intermixed into one mutual order of adjustments:

> Persons and things offer one another mutual support. When they hold together, they prove that agreements concluded among persons entail a type of justice that is in conformity with a type of justness or fitness characterizing harmony or "agreement" among things. With a help of objects, which we shall define by their belonging to a specific world, people can succeed in establishing states of worth. (ibid.: 131)

Spatial and temporal dimensions are also considered in the orders of worth. In such a manner, the civic order operates within the perennial spatial dimension and detached space—the concept of human rights that serves as an argument in, for example, disputes about the migration crisis

are an example of this spatiotemporal dimension. In the following table all the orders of worth are summarized.

For the analysis of the controversy, I have adopted a toolbox proposed by Francis Chateauraynaud (2018). The toolbox includes six tasks, which need not be done chronologically:

1. Establish the chronology of significant events;
2. Clearly define the sets of actors and entities involved in the case to be analyzed;
3. Explore all the articulated justifications and follow their evolution over time;
4. Describe the forms of action and mobilization, domination, and resistance to domination;
5. Attend to the impact of arenas and forms of public discussion on the trajectory of the controversy; and
6. Observe the resolution modes, or their failure, and the bifurcation of the dispute (adapted from Chateauraynaud 2018).

There are several important notes to be added to this methodology. Firstly, justification analysis initially appeared in small-scale studies that aimed to develop the knowledge about the ways in which individuals generalize based on individual cases. Later, it was developed into a broader framework that was described in *On Justification* (2006). The method appeared to be general enough to be applied in the arena of international politics. Secondly, JA is more precise and situation-based than discourse analysis. Thirdly, it could be used for comparative studies of disputes on different topics in culturally, geographically, and politically different environments. In this case, the grammars of public disputes are the matter of comparison.

Firstly, the original intent of PSC was to study small-scale disputes, ordinary critiques, and generalizations. A study exploring the process of generalization based on experiment was conducted by Thévenot and Boltanski in 1983 (Boltanski and Thévenot 1983). The experiment was based on three sessions. During the first, a group of individuals were required to construct a nomenclature for a social "milieux" and then to negotiate how to combine the nomenclatures into a single one. During the second, respondents were asked to produce typical examples of cadres and manual workers. Finally, they were asked to guess the occupation and social milieu of a real, but unknown person. The goal of the study was to grasp the relation between an individual level of generalizing and social categories used in public and official

representations/generalizations (e.g., by trade unions and professional associations). Another example of a small scale but influential research project is Boltanski and his colleagues' work "La Dénonciation" (Boltanski, Darré, and Schiltz 1984). In this study they analyze a heterogeneous sample of letters of denunciation articulated with regard to real-life situations that were sent to *Le Monde*. The authors asked a group of volunteers to judge the statements in the letters from 1 to 10, where 1 is completely normal and 10 is abnormal, in order to prove that denunciations hidden in letters are not just a personal feeling but are socially constructed and could be understood by a third party as an example of injustice. The authors devised a description of a good public complaint according to two axes. First, it should imply generalization, and, second, participants should be as distant from one another as possible (meaning that they are not close persons connected by friendship ties, etc.). This study inspired the civic requirement for legitimacy (Basaure 2014), which was later developed in *On Justification* (2006). The book brought a more general, less locally focused perspective—it proposes a model both for the analysis of micro conflicts as well as non-normative understandings of justice.

On Justification presented a more extensive and wider scope of research—an analysis of two types of texts: handbooks intended for business and organizations and the texts of political philosophers. The goal of the analysis, as described in previous subchapters, was to describe the levels of generalizations that play a key role in defining (in)justice. It brought about the six polities mentioned before. A similar type of analysis was done for the later work, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2007), in which texts for organizations (mainly managerial handbooks) composed the sample. The analysis led Boltanski and Chiapello to the conceptualization of a new polity, the polity of a project—a core polity in neoliberal capitalism. The study was completed with an extensive historical description of the situation from 1960 to 1980, covering the aspirations of protests, the role of trade unions in formatting critique, the consolidation of managers as qualified human beings in the project polity and the capitalist order, technological development, and the like. The study is based on detailed descriptions of conflicts between political parties, trade unions, managers, and employees on the one hand and a critique of a new capitalist order based on unlimited mobility on the other.

JA could be used for an analysis of politics on a wider scope, including international political arenas. In such a manner, the analysis of European constitutional politics and the moral justifications embedded in it represent a research project that is more distanced from the original pragmatics of small-scale disputes and controversies (Blokker 2016). It brings into the analysis

political and legal actors as well as transnational pro-democratic movements. In addition to the locally-oriented comparative research of Thévenot and Moody, it takes into consideration the public arena where disputes take place. In his research, Paul Blokker analyzes claims that emerged in the transnational political arena and links them to theories of European constitution making. The data for this research consisted of texts written by such movements as the European Commons Movement, the Commons Sense movement, European Alternatives, and a Charter for Europe promoted by L'Internationale and the Fundación de los Comunes. Blokker arrives with a definition of five polities in the European transnational political scene: liberal-democratic polity with a principle of justification based on stability and law; rightwing, populist polity with a principle of popular will; federal polity with a principle of pluralism; cosmopolitan polity with a common principle of public reason; and leftwing, populist polity with a basic principle of self-government (ibid.).

Secondly, it is important to emphasize the difference between JA and discourse analysis, which is considered to be too general and too detached from the conflicts experienced by individuals. In their comparative research on two controversies in the United States (the Clavey River dam project) and France (the Somport road and tunnel project), Thévenot, Moody, and Lafaye focus on unobvious distinctions based on the composition of arenas of disputes, participating actors, and their argumentative strategies, actions, and practices (2000). The data for the research consisted of different types of texts: interviews with stakeholders, documents from actors involved in a conflict, and media coverage. The research considered the difference between the types of argumentation used in both cases and focused on "generalized" arguments—arguments that involve principles of the common good which can be understood by a partner, the general public, or a third party (ibid.: 236). It also considered the difference in public arenas where the disputes took place (the spatial and temporal dimensions of justifications). In the course of their study, Thévenot, Moody, and Lafaye arrive at a conceptualization of a green polity. The authors emphasize the difference between their approach and discourse analysis, which they consider to be prone to analytical shortcuts:

> We study comparative politics as enacted in a range of public arenas and sites of conflict, but rooted in local participation and particular controversies, rather than focusing on specialized political institutions or actors. In carrying out such a broad comparison of political culture and practices through specific case studies, we need to avoid the risk of merely reinforcing macro stereotypes of the two "cultures" and of looking for comparative evidence on only one level such as "discourse." We do

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so by relying on precise analytical categories, which have been developed to account for the complex requirements of all actors in public disputes, and by analyzing both the arguments and the actions of a range of disputants in these particular cases. In this way, our approach to studying comparative politics can provide a precise analysis of the cultural models and practices found in political disputes in each country. (2000: 229)

Thirdly, JA is appropriate for analyzing the grammars of disputes that appear in culturally, geographically, and politically different environments. We might also add historical comparison, for example, changes in the compromises achieved within the framework of cultural policies in Quebec (Lemasson 2017). A comparative political analysis that applies the JA methodology in combination with a frame analysis was made between France and Finland (Luhtakallio, Yla-Anttila 2016). This analysis was based on a sample of local media texts on a conflict in their respective states—a critique of globalization in Finland and local politics in France. This research is especially interesting because it demonstrated that the JA method can be used for comparative studies in different states and for conflicts about different topics. Luhtakallio and Yla-Anttila arrived with a generalization about the political culture in both states, where in France the civic order of worth played a much stronger role than in Finland. Moreover, the French were more stuck with continuous reality tests in the civic world, whereas the Finns were more oriented towards the industrial polity (ibid.).

Table 1. Schematic summary of orders of worth

	Market	Industrial	Civic	Domestic	Inspired	Opinion	Green*
Mode of evaluation (worth)	Price, cost	Technical efficiency	Collective welfare	Esteem, reputation	Grace, singularity, creativeness	Renown, fame	Environmental friendliness
Test	Market competitiveness	Competence, reliability, planning	Equality and solidarity	Trustworthiness	Passion, enthusiasm	Popularity, audience, recognition	Sustainability, renewability
Form of relevant proof	Monetary	Measurable: criteria, statistics	Formal, official	Oral, exemplary, personally warranted	Emotional involvement and expression	Semiotic	Ecological, ecosystemic
Qualified objects	Freely circulating market goods and services	Infrastructure, project, technical object, method, plan	Rules and regulations, fundamental rights, welfare policies	Patrimony, locale, heritage	Emotionally invested body or item: the sublime	Sign, media	Pristine wilderness, healthy environment, natural habitat
Qualified human beings	Customer, consumer, merchant, seller	Engineer, professional, expert	Equal citizens, solidarity unions	Authority	Creative being	Celebrity	Environment
Time formation	Short-term, flexibility	Long-term, planned future	Perennial	Customary past	Eschatological, revolutionary, visionary moment	Vogue, trend	Future generations
Space formation	Globalization	Cartesian space	Detachment	Local, proximal, anchoring	Presence	Communication, network	Planet ecosystem

(Thevenot, Moody, and Lafaye 2000)

*By analogy we can speak about the project world with its particular mode of evaluation (mobility), form of test (ability to start a project / to be mobile / to move from one project to another), form of relevant proof (amount of useful contacts / sharing useful information), qualified objects (project applications/descriptions, grant applications), qualified human beings (project managers, analytics), time formation (short-term, limited to a project), and space formation (in networks (online)).

3. Empirical part

The part that follows starts with a definition of my own position as a researcher and an activist. It continues with a description of the case and an elaboration of the data collected for this thesis. The data analysis is summarized in three chapters, each exploring one of the actors that participated in the public dispute concerning Klinika: civil servants, autonomous activists, and municipal politicians. The data included in the analysis is much wider than the case itself, enabling more general conclusions to be made as to the nature of the state as well as new tactics of domination, activism, repression, municipal politics, and changes in the public debates about urban space that have occurred over the past ten to fifteen years.

Here I find it necessary to explain why I do not include media and police in the analysis. I consider mass media to be a separate arena of dispute (and, at the same time, another actor); thus, I include it only in cases where the activists, politicians, or civil servants directly cite it. In comparison with the state and the municipality, media does not represent a category of governing power and could not be analyzed based on the ontological, epistemological, and methodological frame discussed above. Furthermore, while a movement's activity may be targeted against the media discourse and vice-versa, it is not targeted against it in the same manner as it is when against an institutional order of the state and local politics. It is exactly this conflict with the order that I am interested in, and the chosen analytic framework respects this interest. Moreover, existing research has already shown that in the media arena, Klinika managed to change the image of squatting and enjoyed positive coverage (Böhmová 2018; Galová 2017).

I also do not include police in the analysis for the following reasons: Klinika was evicted by police several days after the initial occupation. However, at the end of the project, it was a private debt collector who "evicted" it due to a change in the legal status of the social center (initial agreement with the owner). This is connected to the change in tactics—instead of an autonomous disappearance from an institutional order in Day's sense, Klinika created tests of civility for itself (see below) that it passed by proving its worthy to the civil order. It was engaged in a process of self-legitimation and public approval. This might be seen as a general turn towards post-autonomy (Böhmová 2018) and a more Gramscian understanding of politics (engagement in counter-hegemonic struggles). However, here I would like to point out that not every change in tactics denotes a change in general political stance. Tactics themselves do not define a movement's ideology or identity. Quite to the contrary, they may also refer as much to the high level of repression and weakness of the autonomous movement, which does not have

many tactical choices in order to reach its goal of creating an open, public political space—with squatting for housing, it is different because these spaces do not need public support. In this case, the movement might choose to seek public legitimization. Whether imposing tests of civility on itself meant a change in politics or it was done due to the absence of possibilities, physical violence did not play a key role in the process as has happened in other cases of squatting described above. The squat was evicted by police when it was beyond the law but, when it entered the legal-bureaucratic arena, the type of violence changed. The move from autonomy to post-autonomy (if we accept this hypothesis) also means a move from physical violence to other types of violence and domination (legal, economic, and bureaucratic). In many cases autonomous movements are not prepared for this tactic of domination and violence because they are used to resisting police (e.g., through passive resistance) rather than bureaucrats and debt collectors. This is an important point to emphasize: when the conflict about urban space falls within the parameters of civility—that is, the actors involved satisfy the parameters of the civil order of worth—the type of violence involved changes towards the symbolic and semantic, whereas the police remain an actor guiding the line between civility and incivility. Moreover, police did not actively participate in the dispute and did not produce enough data for it to be analyzed as a separate actor. However, it is important to emphasize that, during the course of the dispute, the police did serve as a reference point to prove statements of both the institutional actors and the social movement who were attempting to prove the incivility or civility of the social center. The institutional actors used reports of extremism to criminalize squatters, whereas the squatters used statistics gathered by police to prove that their activities do not cause a growth in criminality. In such a manner, some documents produced by police served as proof for some statements, but it was not involved as a full-fledged actor.

It is also important to emphasize that I have closer personal ties with activists than with civil servants or municipal politicians. This enables me to make a broader conclusion about the activists' engagement with familiarity. Though I attempt to make conclusions about the engagement with familiarity of two other social actors, they are based on much less evidence.

3.1. Position of the researcher

I find it important to begin the empirical part with defining my own position as a researcher and outlining the personal development that entered the creation of this work. For this description, I do not find it necessary to involve theory because theory does to the individual experience what an institutional order does to the world of social experience—it brings definitive structures to action and thinking, and, as such, they are always limiting, dominating, and constraining.

Instead, I will point out the gradation of my conceptual apparatus from the position proposed by PSC (sociologist as an observer of the processes of confirmation and critique inherent to reality and a careful recorder of manifestations of a critical capacity) to the position of an activist who has a critical capacity herself. In short, I started writing this work as a PhD student of PSC and finished as an activist. This might seem contradictory, especially with regard to the theory which I apply. However, I must emphasize that I consider a PhD to be a process that has a blurred beginning and an end, not a monolithic and coherent piece of thought. Much less so is it the document that the reader now has in hand—it has no ambition to present an ultimate and fixed scientific statement. In the course of the writing process, a change happens, and, if it does not, then the whole process of education and studying is deprived of meaning.

The concepts that I use in the closing remarks of this thesis must be seen in this vein. Mainly, this refers to the concept of totality, which does not come from the pragmatic sociology of critique but from what I have been told by the respondents: the possibility of a meaningful action in urban terrain is not possible because of the set of constrains that I will discuss later in this chapter. The absence of a possibility for meaningful action (totality) is connected here to the neoliberal order which I criticize from an activist position—because I myself find it very difficult to act. Through this, I play into the hands of those who have pointed out the melancholia in left-wing circles (Nunes 2021) and the dead-end of revolutionary thinking (Day 2005). In comparison with Nunes and Day, however, my work does not propose any organizational or ideational improvement, it stops by pointing out the nature of the urban order we live in today in the capital city of the Czech Republic.

The analyzed case was for me one of the major inputs in my politicization towards far-left ideas. Later in the text, I describe the social center as a political moment and a space for politicization and enlargement of the radical left movement. This work supports this argument. Following Boltanski now, at the very end of my studies, I can agree that it is very important to catch the confirmation and critique of social actors, and it is extremely important to seek logic in all types of actions, not just in those of the social movements. But, more importantly, I believe that sociology is a critical science itself and must not leave this stance. Thus, following Peck, Theodore, and Brenner I would rather say: "The critical intellectual project of deciphering the problematic of neoliberal urbanism must continue to evolve" (2013: 1091).

The inability to find a final moral stance and get caught in the flows of confirmation and critique, all of which might be legitimized and delegitimized at the same time, is an illness of

left-wing thought indoctrinated with post-modernism, which in turn speeds up the march towards dead-end revolutionary thinking. What makes sociology critical is its sensitivity to the fragility of an institutional order and recognition of its artificial and accidental nature—this means there is always a chance for change, even in times of melancholia, an abortive imagination of the future and totalities of all kinds. With this recognition, sociology must speak for itself, as a critical practice of writing and acting, both in the universities (and against the universities) and outside of them.

Such a change in my position did not influence the way I collected and analyzed the study's data. My own critical position is articulated only in the conclusion. Ontologically, epistemologically, and methodologically, I follow PSC and explore the logics of all social actors with the same attitude. This brought about an interesting result: the social actors who are considered dominant are themselves at a dead-end in imagination despite (allegedly) having more power. If the political work of the social movements seeks to move further, it must realize a rationality in this fragile hegemonic order and be aware of the processes of legitimization through confirmation and critique as well as the fact that many people around us think that this order is just. This understanding in addition to attempts at bringing about a different but solid and secure understanding of justice is one of the goals of today's social movements.

3.2.   Case description

The Autonomous Social Center Klinika (hereinafter "ASC Klinika") functioned in Prague, Czech Republic from 2014 to 2019. In 2014, a group of activists came to an abandoned building located on state property, cleaned it of trash and syringes, and started to run a self-organized social center. The activists sent a project proposal defining the main goals of the social center to the owner of the building, the Office for Government Representation in Property Affairs (hereinafter "the Office"). The project expressed disenchantment caused by the commodification of urban space and called for the purification of human life based on solidarity and equality outside from the logic of profit. This critique of the capitalist order and bureaucratic state finds its material existence in prefigurative practice—the autonomous functioning of the center defines its own rules based on the decisions of the collective, not those imposed on them by capitalist/state institutions (Klinika collective 2014). The project was supported by a petition signed by approximately two thousand people (Petice.com 2014). After few days, the social center was evicted by police. The eviction was followed by several demonstrations. Later, the Office initiated a public competition for the building, which ASC Klinkia won, legalizing itself with an agreement of one year. According to interviews with

activists and former state officials, the agreement was the result of involvement by then minister of finance (and later prime minister) Andrej Babiš. I interpret such a surprising encounter of two different social actors in this research as being caused by a change in the state's public justifications concerning the conditions of radical uncertainty. Use of the empty building as a social center by activists was attractive to the newly established order of justice in state institutions, which is based on efficiency and performance. In the beginning, with its strong accent on civic values (lectures, workshops, a kindergarten, etc.) and its ability to quickly create urban forms with no financial support, ASC Klinika fit this logic, even if supported by radical direct action.

After a year, the agreement was not prolonged due to allegedly newly found documents (building approval certificate) from the local construction department, which states that the building cannot be used other than for a hospital, which it was originally. This document was never found; the building was permitted and approved but the certificate itself does not exist (A2larm 2016). At the same time, the European migration crisis started, and the social center was attacked by a right-wing group. Local right-wing conservative politicians from the Prague 3 municipal district named Klinika a "security risk" and a "battlefield for left- and right-wing extremists" (praha3.cz 2016). Activists announced the refusal to extend the contract illegitimate and proclaimed their intention to engage in civil disobedience. According to activists, the termination of the agreement was a result of the activists' support for migrants during the crisis. The migration crisis had become a politicizing event. The conflict between the autonomous Left and the neoliberal technocratic state, which had turned to the conservative side of the migration debate, became visible and unbreachable, even though the social imaginary signification of performed efficiency was still prominent and important. In 2015, another petition signed by approx. four thousand people demanded further steps in order to prolong the agreement. The occupation would remain contested for four more years, with the activists managing to stay in the building until 2019. In the beginning, they were supported by local politicians from the Prague 3 district municipality and the Prague city municipality. The social center has been discussed during several sittings of the Prague city assembly. An attempt to transfer the building from state property to the city of Prague failed (but was supported by a third petition with approximately two thousand signatures). This failure is explained by the fact that the alleged transfer of the building to another department of the state appeared to formally mean the building was no longer abandoned. Like the previously described building approval certificate, this notion seems to be unfounded. In both cases, the ability of the state institutions

to use privileged access to information (to the construction departments and between state institutions) and to find the certificates confirming reality (truth tests) was used as a means of domination. This proves the outcomes of the existing research that claim dominant institutions use information superiority as a means of domination against those who do not have full access to it (Černý, Moskvina, and Böhmová: forthcoming). The arena is guided by the bureaucratic logic of certificates and rules, as well as bureaucracy itself, which together I conceptualize here as a bureaucratic arena (a part of police, following Rancière).

In 2019, a decision by the Constitutional Court stated that the state-owner did not act against good morals[4] and did not break § 3 article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms[5]. The final eviction of the social center was carried out by a private debt collector in 2019. The debt collector charged 11,600 euros (290,000 CZK) for the eviction, but the activists appealed to the court in order to dispute this amount and won. There are several other legal suits in this case: the court of appeals banned Klinika from using the building as a social center based on the alleged building approval certificate only to have the city court of Prague later cancel this decision (Uhlová 2016); the owner of the building filed with the court an accusation of unjust enrichment (approx. 14,000 euros) on the part of the center, which was again later cancelled by the district court of Prague 3 (Česká televize 2017)). The court and other arenas where legal language is used is conceptualized in this thesis as a legal arena (a part of police, following Rancière). As the previous research on resistance demonstrates, dominant actors transfer struggles with resisting actors to the court because they can afford better lawyers (Černý, Moskvina, and Böhmová: forthcoming). Moreover, the politics of the streets—protests and occupations—is not an arena where state institutions can possibly win (or even participate). The politics of the streets, as well as the arena of radical ideological conflicts (conflicts that seek to re-establish the basic rules of societal functioning and in which existential tests appear over their course) I conceptualize here as a political arena, following Rancière. This was the case for ASC Klinika: after short involvement in the political debate, the state institutions (the owners of the building), transferred the actions to the legal arena where they had more chance of winning. They also used the court as a means to repress and intimidate the activists. Some of the appeals make no sense (e.g., accusations of profit-making); however, they did play a role

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[4] Good morals in Czech law are defined as historically embedded basic norms, which must always be contextualized in each case. The principle of good morals is applied in cases where the law is not broken but behavior still goes against the basic social, cultural, and moral norms (Lavický et al. 2014).

[5] This article states, "Ownership entails obligations. It may not be misused to the detriment of the rights of others or in conflict with legally protected public interests. It may not be exercised so as to harm human health, nature, or the environment beyond the limits laid down by law."

in demoralizing and demotivating the activists. The state institutions, even in the case of a loss, will lose much less that a citizen because they have much more financial means to cover the court expenses. Thus, the legal arena of battle and the threat of economic violence become strengthening formats of repression instead of police (Černý, Moskvina, and Böhmová: forthcoming; Novák 2019).

Following the ontology of the pragmatic psychology of critique (PSC), this study focuses on social actors, their involvement in public disputes, and the justifications that these actors articulate. Generally, the public dispute around ASC Klinika is important because it is one of the major disputes over urban space between the autonomous left-wing scene, the state bureaucracy, and local politicians. For both civil servants and local politicians, the case served as a moment of politicization, a conflict which manifested the political logics of both, as well as the orders of justification towards the public. National politicians (except for the direct involvement of Andrej Babiš) did not play an important role in the conflict.

The Klinika case is seen as an entry point into the analysis of public disputes concerning urban space, public justifications articulated by state officials, municipal politicians, and autonomous activists. These disputes took place within several different arenas: legal, bureaucratic, municipal politics, and the political—the first three refer to police and the latter to politics (for the explanation, see below). As was noted before, these justifications are not created by the actors directly; rather, they exist in the social world and are historically given. Thus, on the basis of an exploration into the justifications involved in the dispute, it is possible to make generic hypotheses about the nature of radical critique and autonomous politics, municipal politics, and the domination of state institutions. Importantly, this nature is explored within the optics of symbolic and semantic architecture, not just that of direct violence (as is often the case in studies on squatting).

3.3.   Data description

During the course of the research, it became obvious that the meanings actors give urban space are inseparable from more general justifications and the tests formats implemented in the operational logics of these actors (state institutions, municipal politics, activists). Therefore, there is a wider range of data included in the analysis. The primary data consists of twenty-four interviews. One interview was taken from available media (a2larm.cz). Secondary sources (Facebook statuses, media articles, assembly minutes, etc.) as well as primary sources are described in detail in this section.

Importantly, some of the actors, mainly civil servants, are not comfortable with providing commentary on political activism, which Klinika is. Thus, I included a wider range of data in the analysis. Furthermore, it became obvious that the justificatory logics changed over time—a matter of broader political change. In this research, the moment Andrej Babiš became minister of finance indicates a turn towards the performativity of the state instead of doing "conceptual work," to put it in the words of a civil servant (Respondent 19). To grasp these changes, I included documents dated before the 2014 occupation of Klinika. In this way, the analysis remains focused on the urban dispute over ASC Klinika, but it is not limited by it. Rather, it looks into more general logics implemented in the different social groups that participated in the dispute.

Of these, three main actors participated in the ASC Klinika dispute. First is the Office for the Government Representation in Property Affairs. As the Office deals directly with state property, it becomes a suitable actor for an analysis of the civil servants' discourse about urban space. At the request of the respondents, I will not unveil any information about their current state of employment, and for the purposes of higher anonymity, all the respondents are considered to be former employees. This set of data includes:

- Five interviews with former employees of the Office (one 40-year-old woman; four men aged 39, 35, and 40; one man refused to provide information), one interview is taken from a secondary source (an interview published on a2larm.cz in March 2013 with Kateřína Arajmu, a 42-year-old female and the head of the Office), one interview with an employee from the Ministry of the Environment, one interview with an employee of the Ministry of Regional Development (both males, 55 and 42 years old respectively, and both in positions related to urban development). For a full description of all respondents, see the appendix.
- Seven annual reports from the Office dated 2013 to 2019.
- Press releases from the Office, one third of all those available online from 2015 to 2019 (58 out of 184). The criterion for selection was the presence of an identifiable order of justice in the text and direct relevance to the space/city/property.
- Facebook posts from 2014 until 2020, 113 out of 1101 (10%). The posts were downloaded with the program Facepager. 113 posts were selected via a random number generator. In cases where the random number generator selected a post which did not respect the criteria, a substitute was selected by the generator.

Secondly, the autonomous movement as the main protagonist is analyzed based on the following data:

- Interviews (six with females 32, 31, 29, 28, 23, and 19 years old and two with males 30 and 33 years old).
- Twenty-five articles published on a2larm.cz and eighteen published on Deník Referendum (only those written by the activists, out of a total of 82) from 2014 to 2020, all related to Klinika.
- 135 Facebook posts out of 1,615 from the Klinika collective dated 2014 to 2020. The selection was done according to the above-described method.
- 106 articles published on ASC Klinika's website.
- The 2014 Klinika project proposal and two annual reports from 2014 and 2017.

The third actor that participated in the dispute was the municipal government of the Prague 3 district. In the analysis, I include both interviews with local politicians of this district as well as other politicians from other districts and the Prague city government. The selected data serves to analyze the current municipal politics in Prague in relation to urban space. The data for this actor includes:

- Four with the politicians from the Prague 3 municipal district (three males, aged 38, 37, and 23 and one female, 38 years old), from the Prague city government (one 60-year-old male), and politicians from other Prague districts whose work is directly related to urban development (four males, 54, 52, 43, and 39 years old).
- Three sets of minutes from the Prague city assembly where the topic of Klinika was discussed.
- Nine documents from the Prague 3 municipal government (transcripts from council meetings, chronicle, and statements selected with the key word "Klinika" which contain a discussion on the case (not just mentions))
- Two open letters from local politicians on the topic of the Klinika squat that were directed towards the citizens of Prague 3.
- Facebook posts from the local Green Party that supported Klinika (from 2014 to 2020, 44 posts) and Facebook posts from the local ODS party that opposed Klinika (from 2015 to 2019, 43 posts).

- Articles in local newspapers written by supporters or opponents of the case who work in the local municipality (*Kauza 3* and *Radniční noviny* from 2014 to 2019, 26 and 21 respectively; only those related to Klinika).

The data was analyzed using the program MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2022. A coding system based on the orders of worth was used, as well as open coding. The unit of an analysis is one paragraph and in the case of Facebook statuses, one status, whereas in the interviews a coherent text composed of one or more sentences. The coding, based on the orders of worth, consists of such codes as "worth/value," "test" (coming from the industrial, civic, inspired, etc. world), "form of relevant proof" (emotional involvement, formal, public support, planning, etc.), "qualified objects" (project, regulations, agreements, legal subjectivity, etc.), "qualified human beings" (activists, developers, politicians, etc.), "time formation" (planned future, temporal, past, revolutionary moment, etc.), and "space formation" (local, municipal, presence, uncertain future, etc.). The open coding is related to repeated topics which appeared important during the research, for example, the imagination of politicization, criminalization of squatting, historical change, and so on. In documents such as the annual reports of the Office, I also investigated the used style and covered topics in order to grasp general changes in the public justifications. For the Facebook statues, the style was important. In the following sections, I analyze first the public justification of the state and, secondly, the activists' orders of justification and engagement formats. Finally, I analyze the public justifications articulated by both the opponents and supporters of the case on the municipal politics level.

3.4. State performativity and the rise of new domination tactics

I begin this section with an exploration of the change in the Office's justificatory logic, its connection to the engagement in a plan (strategy), and engagement in familiarity (what this change means for the everyday work of civil servants). The change, as was already mentioned, happened with the change in parliamentary politics. Efficiency, depoliticization, a turn towards an ideal-typical representation of the state as a private enterprise purified of political conflicts (Cisar and Štětka 2016; Havlík 2018), and a tightening of the state (*zeštíhlování státu* in Czech) are symptomatic of Babiš's rule, as described above. This change happened in reaction to a critique of the state as inefficient, which was articulated by the wider society and perceived by the civil servants themselves. It is a reform, an implementation of new types of tests into the institutional order (a reassessment of the semantic rules, following Boltanski (2011)). In the

second part, I describe the current public justification of the Office based on a performative market-industrial complex and conclude with the analysis of domination tactics.

3.4.1 From conceptual work to the performative state

As PSC states, institutions are under conditions of radical uncertainly. Their role is to increase certainty in the world by stabilizing the reality. However, the data for this research shows that the state is becoming more and more uncertain itself. On the level of engagement in public justification, there is an increasing articulation of the market-industrial complex (which can be measured by money or numbers as obvious proof instead of developing laws, concepts, processes, etc.) and performativity—dependent on public opinion. As previously mentioned, this change came as Andrej Babiš became the minister of finance and later prime minister. However, it is important not to attribute the change to one person (even if he is described as being "obsessed with rationalization" (Respondent 13)), but rather to see this figure himself as a result of the transformation of the state towards depoliticized, effective, technocratic management—rational mastery, one of the conflicting social imaginary significations present in today's social word (alongside autonomous democracy) (Castoriadis 1998). Politicization of the state service thus is not happening due to the direct influence of institutional politicians but thanks to the penetration of meanings (significations) present in politics into the meanings and practices present in bureaucracy. One of the civil servants describes the situational change after 2014:

> When Babiš and his gang came… one of his feats was that his people jumped on the state offices like they were malnourished horses and started to ride them… There was a demand for that in the beginning… There was an idea that, in the ministries, … people do not do anything, and it is time to fix it. There was one chairman…, famous for such things,… once he took all the fridges from the offices and then bought new ones, a few of them, and put them in the corridors. (Respondent 13).

Another civil servant emphasizes the change in the everyday practice:

> I am not sure that quick always means efficient. Currently, a large amount of work has appeared that is based on the creation of documents for the public representation of the minister in different forums. Basically, it is a marketing presentation of her

work. Honestly, I would prefer to do conceptual work instead of this marketing twaddle. (Respondent 16)

As is obvious from the above cited fragments, change in public justifications also brings about change to everyday practices (engagement in familiarity)—the nature of work becomes less "conceptual" and more performative. It is important to emphasize that such a change does not mean that the usual bureaucratic work disappears; rather, it means that there are stronger conflicts between the public requirements for efficient performance and the internal everyday practices in following the bureaucratic rules. As Patriotta Gond, and Schultz put it, civil servants are stuck between "conflicting requirements stemming from a plurality of forms of legitimacy" [Patriotta et al. 2011: 1809] present in the wider society. Here, it is important to recall to the demands of the 1990s' and early 2000s' movements as described by Císař and Navrátil (2017): the efficient functioning of the state. While it is not possible to state with this analysis whether such a change in state functioning is a reaction to these demands, one must still place it in the same context of interdependency between critique and the institutional order. The answer of the institutional order to these requests however is not actual efficiency, but its performance.

There are requirements in the everyday legal work of state officials which are in contradiction to the process of performing an efficient state. One civil servant describes her disenchantment with how her work is perceived by the general public: "There are a lot of tasks over the 'long run.' It seems that there are no results, but this is not true. I would like to see a change in the perception of the state" (Respondent 9). Another civil servant emphasizes the constant need to justify the public image of bureaucracy: "[There is] a need to justify our work to the public and media, which were usually angry at "clerks" and "bureaucrats" beforehand. Meanwhile, we ourselves are not happy with problems and unsolved issues regarding the management of the state" (Respondent 10). The value of efficiency thus, just as Castoriadis claims, is not formed inside the institutional order, but comes from outside it and is formed within the society as a whole (Castoriadis 1998).

The tendency towards performativity of measurable and monetary criteria concerning the good work of the state is also proved by the analysis of the Office's 2013–2019 annual reports. Firstly, the worth of profit becomes more important starting in 2015 following the change in government. After a short introduction about the Office's activities, the annual reports from 2013 and 2014 continue with an explanation of the legislative changes and the legal agenda of the Office. In general, reports from before 2015 are more explanatory than the later ones in the

sense that they contain a large number of references to law, as well as legal and procedural explanations for the Office's work. In comparison with these reports, the reports issued after 2015 contain less legal and procedural explanations, but much more references to "extraordinary profit," "record savings," "extraordinary success," "historic first …" which presents truth tests (confirmatory mechanisms) for the new, efficient, and competitive state. The reports also become shorter and more colorful; they tend to incorporate more grafts and less text. They appear as entertaining brochures rather than long legal documents. Long explanatory sections describing laws and regulations as per the Office's operations become laconic. The reports become closer to the reader—now they have an introductory text written by the head of the Office with her photo. The word "transparency" appears in 2015, whereas the section "Prospects" disappears, emphasizing the turn to the short-term temporal dimension of the market order of worth. After 2015, the reports include, in addition to the personal introduction from the head of the Office, shorter texts, a bigger accent on profit, less elaboration of laws and regulations, and a stress on technologies (maps, databases, etc.). This demonstrates the turn from the civic-industrial complex (legal requirements and measurable criteria with less accent on profit-making) to the market-industrial complex (profit and measurable criteria translated into price) with notions of domestic worth (the personal introduction that makes the Office's report "closer" to the reader and brings trustworthiness to this state institution). The Facebook page also serves an important role in bringing the Office closer to the people. It is full of curious stories and catchy statuses: stories of tortured dogs and horses from a shelter or strange things on sale such as the possessions of tenants who had died (e.g., horns and a poacher's gun that a 92-years-old lady had hid behind a fireplace), cheap cars, syringes, and the knives of criminal offenders, as well as villas, houses, recreation areas promoted in poetic or fun way.

3.4.2. Performance of the market-industrial complex to the public

It should be noted that none of the orders of worth exist in the discourse of the civil servants in pure form. There are elements that come from the civic and domestic order—mainly, in reference to tests of trustworthiness which take the form of procedures of transparency; an emphasis on rules and regulations, which, careful followed, qualifies the Office as a department with a good reputation; and a definition of humans as qualified to participate in a dispute only when they have legal subjectivity. However, the most frequent order of worth in the discourse of state officials is market efficiency, presented mainly as cutting state expenses and growing profit (truth tests). It is worth noting that the Office does not actually generate profit and its

expenses are higher than its revenues; nonetheless, the emphasis is put on the latter. The value of things is translated into measurable and monetary criteria. For example, historical houses are valued for their having been sold for a "record price" or a lucrative rate, but not for their historical worth (ÚZSVM 2017a). The legal requirements of the Office are interpreted from the point of market order (however, it does not have to be so):

> "*The governmental office acts in a way that cannot damage or decrease the value of a property in number, price, or revenue.*" Besides other things, this means that, according to the law, we must strive [to obtain] the highest possible revenue from the property where it is possible. The Office is controlled by different authorities. We must always prove § 14 [§ 14 of Act No 219/2000 Coll.]. Otherwise, […] the state employee could face a risk of being forced to pay for the damage of the property. (ÚZSVM 2020, [italics in orig.])

The market order of worth must compromise with that of the industrial order and technical efficiency. The Office collects all "the offers of abandoned property of the state in one place" (Žurovec 2019) with the goal of decreasing the number of abandoned state buildings either via transfer or by sale (truth tests confirming the reality of efficiency). The number of transfered or sold buildings is proof of the Office's competent property management based on a method of dealing with the Cartesian space in order to find its best use. It becomes an "effective and cost-saving state office, the result of which are the highest profits and the lowest costs in history" (Arajmu 2016). This market-industrial compromise is supported by managerial language (e.g., terms like "realization," meaning the disposal of property; "optimization," meaning lowering costs through the transfer of administrative buildings from commercial rent; or "portfolio," a term often used by developers). The following citation from the 2016 annual report summarizes the vision of the Office: "Gradually, [the Office] becomes a legal office of the state which solves legal suits, a public real estate agency of the state which manages unused property, and a manager of administrative buildings" (ÚZSVM 2016b).

The stress on the market-time formation and fast-circulating objects (in this case real estate) causes a conflict with the bureaucratic rules and laws which must be complied with so as to move the buildings. On the one hand, there is technology helping to quickly sell state property (auction), but on the other hand there are a number of formal civic tests that should be passed in order for the transaction to happen (transfer commission, offers to other state departments, open competitions, etc.). Generally, short-term flexible market time formation is unpredictable.

Reliance on the market order in such a way causes a lack of long-term planning. "The profit-generating of the Office has an unpredictable character. […] e.g., the demands of state institutions that have priority before public sales, influence profits" (as well as other legal requirements and unexpected revenues, e.g., acquiring property from dead citizens or from criminal affairs) (ÚZSVM 2019: 9). The longest future planned is that which is defined by the state budget, to which profit is compared (year to year). This type of flexible and short-term time formation is a characteristics of project capitalism as defined by Boltanski and Chiapello (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). However, the long-term planned future characteristic of the industrial order also might be grasped: this is the idea of a perfectly composed urban space where all the buildings are used either by the state or by private owners, and none are abandoned.

Finally, the opinion of citizens (the opinion order of worth) plays an important role for the Office as it seeks to perform the market-industrial complex to the audience, as was already mentioned above. Besides catchy language touting extraordinary profits and savings and a funny Facebook page, the worth of opinion is supported through work with the mass media. "The auction of an area in Náměstí Republiky in Prague, record annual profits, and a map of the state property are the topics which were most rewarding for the Office" (ÚZSVM 2019). Information about successful legal suits or millions of saved crowns thanks to new technology were other topics mentioned in the annual reports, and, through their use, the Office boosts its recognition. In press releases, proof of the opinion of worth comes in the form of rewording, for example, in transparency, in implementing electronic auctions (the head of the Office received a reward called "A Person of eGovernment" in 2018), or in the field of state critical infrastructure protection. This focus on opinion and public image however is criticized by former state employees as hypocritical:

> Klinika was an example of political hypocrisy and farce. … today, nobody describes or makes recommendations on their own initiative … to provide property to some project for a good price, except for political purposes, for political PR … It is only about money. And it could be different… but the state officials are always conservative—but it does not have to be to such an extreme. (Respondent 13)

The opinion of citizens is also connected to anti-corruption measures and public control, which is made possible thanks to digitalization (transparency). Transparency means publishing information about property managed by the Office, access to information (Act No 106/1999

Coll.), open competitions, the possibility to attend sealed-bid auctions, and internal audits. All these measures have a character of observation; involvement in decision-making over state property is possible only as a buyer (and thus, the state is a seller). Importantly, the notion of transparency appeared in the annual reports at the same time as the change towards performativity of the market-industrial complex—it appears to be a compromise between the values of openness and the values of technology which enable market procedures to function more properly:

> The new transparent way of selling state property issued by the head of the Office had a positive affect [on profits]. The selection procedure via auction often brings higher selling prices to the state. We had 114 bids, increasing the price by up to 600%. (ÚZSVM 2017b)

3.4.3 Space stuck under bureaucratic rules and efficiency requirements

On the one hand, the buildings are embedded in complex legal norms and regulations which are increasing in complexity (thus, more bureaucracy) over time. As a former state official describes:

> Now it is more confusing. More subjects are involved in the decision-making process about state property. The procedure is more complicated. Some of the sale agreements prepared by the state organization go to the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of the Environment. The process must consider the interests of these ministries … before the agreement can be validated. … Now, a lot of agreements cannot be signed because, even in cases where everything is paid, the ministry could say that there is something wrong and the whole thing must be revised… this is the price we pay these days. Everyone must be protected from a mistake. (Respondent 12)

This bureaucratic complexity of norms and rules under which urban space exists enabled the social center to last for three years after the agreement was over. The transfer of state property is not a quick procedure. Despite numerous attempts, it took years to find a new owner. The fact that space can fall under bureaucratic rules creates a time window which might be used by squatters. Cracks in the reality (even if this reality appears to be a garbage heap in the suburbs of capitalism) are the spaces from which the flowers of autonomy grow—both a weakness and a strength of autonomous movements. Legal and bureaucratic holes that leave the buildings abandoned and undefined provide opportunities for autonomous centers such as Klinika,

especially under conditions of weak public support—not the case for Klinika but true of the Czech Republic in general. This is also one of the reasons why there were more squats in the 1990s than there are in the 2020s: the urban order has become consolidated, institutions seek to name and define city property (which is extremely valuable) and not leave its status unclear. It is worth noting that squatting in this case might serve as a catalyst for this consolidation.

Law and legal subjectivity are also what define those who can participate in the public dispute concerning urban space and the state. Klinika's case demonstrates that the Office criminalized the squatters when they had occupied the building without an agreement and after the agreement was over. The Office used terms like "violent forced entry," "illegal," "Klinika pushes the Office to act against the law," "the rights of the Czech Republic must be protected," "dangerous precedent," and others. Conversely, under the agreement, the Office instead used terms such as "autonomous social center," "civic organization," "initiative," or "association." The explanation is that the state does not see humans as qualified entities but institutional categories. Thus, making agreements with humans unqualified under the law is, for state institutions, not convenient, because they have only mastery over legal terminology. A former civil servant describes the situation as such:

> Different interpretations of the current law, which each of the participating groups has [explains the logic of public dispute over urban space]. Each group sees it from its professional point of view—developers, conservationists, constructing engineers—or from the point of view of the local community, municipal government, which favors the interests of the citizens. On the other hand, there is the interest of the state … to protect the public space for the purposes of … state use. It can be in contradiction with the interests of municipalities, which is often the case. There are a lot of examples: construction that lasts dozens of years and is still unfinished. … A very narrow understanding of law, which each of these groups has, is the problem. The worst is, that each of these groups has a very good logical justification and mastery of the paragraphs, so the state, which has an apparat of lawyers, cannot break the municipality and neither can the municipality denounce its efforts, … each fights for itself. Then the developers get involved. Developers already see ATMs, gas stations, auto services, auto salons— The worst are logistic centers which destroys the hearts of everyone who sees them… Each of these groups has a very worked-through position and, from this position, tries to influence

as much as it can. Everything is within the framework of law. The law is flexible. Everyone has their own truth, and it is very hard to manage it. (Respondent 12)

On the other hand, the buildings are presented in the annual reports as easily transferrable from one state department to another, as well as from public to private property. First, the Office creates cheaper state infrastructure—it transfers the buildings in a quest to cut costs. Second, the buildings which are historically valuable or situated in lucrative locations hold the most worth for the Office as they can qualify it as an efficient profit-making and savings manager. One of the biggest sales in this regard was realized in 2015. A historical building in the Prague city center was sold to a foreign investor for 790 million CZK in two minutes (Arajmu in Česká televize 2015). The head of the Office, in reaction to a television anchor who had critiqued the sale, said, "This critique is groundless. We are talking about property in which we must, or the future owner must invest around 100, 120 million CZK for reconstruction. At the same time, there is space for 240 state officials. For the price of 790 million CZK, we are able to build an area that hosts three times more state officials in the middle of a greenfield" (Arajmu in Česká televize 2015).

The market-industrial complex is the logic acquired by the Office as a result of the political change and perceived pressure from the society as regards efficient bureaucracy that can produce visible and measurable results (in many cases, monetary). Klinika's project proposal was in compliance with this logic—it was an efficient use of an abandoned building with no financial support. This demonstrates the depoliticized performative nature of the technocratic state, which is guided by the logic of profit and efficiency (neoliberal state) despite an embeddedness within the bureaucratic complexity that is getting more and more extended. Politics, as it is obvious from this case, is not always present, but it appears in particular historical circumstances such as the migration crisis. Klinika itself became a political moment when the creative youths put the market-industrial justification of the state to the test by running the project cheaply and efficiently. In the beginning the test was passed by the dominant order and the project remained in the building for a year. However, the bigger test to which the political elites were put (migration crisis) required redefinition of belonging in the society, putting the public image of the state at stake again. Here, the performative nature of the state turned its back on the small urban project, which had become a symbol of solidarity with refugees.

Conversely, the case demonstrates how the dominant discourse can be pragmatically applied by the movement in ways that social movement studies would call radical. In the following section, I will look at the tactics of domination, and, in the sections after, I will return to the pragmatics of critique.

3.4.4. Informational-bureaucratic domination, legal intimidation, and economic repression

There are three visible types of state domination and repression that could be seen in the public dispute between Klinika and the Office. The first is inherent to the functioning of the institutional order: semantic domination, particularly informational-bureaucratic domination. The other two were used as rather repressive tactics by the state: legal intimidation based on domination in the legal arena and economic repression. In all three cases, domination by relocation is important—the ability of institutional actors to relocate the disputes from an uncomfortable arena (streets) to arenas which are more comfortable (bureaucracy, court). It is also important that this domination is not inherently attached to an actor. The institutional order is dominant in arenas where it has mastery over the tests formats; however, it is not dominant in politics, where domination belongs to the activists.

The first is based on privileged access to information and the ability to find and issue documents and certificates that prove the "official" reality (Bourdieu 2014). This is what Boltanski calls semantic domination—ownership of the test formats through which reality is proven. The state used this type of domination twice in the Klinika case: firstly, by finding the building approval certificate claiming the building could only be used as a hospital, and secondly, through the alleged transfer of the building to another state department. In Boltasnki's words, the institutions changed the reality, which was then put to the test—the building "actually" cannot be used as a social center, or it is "actually" being used for something (the transfer) (2011). The latter, moreover, gives the illusion of constant change (there is something happening with the building despite it actually being abandoned), another aspect of what Boltanksi describes as semantic domination (ibid.). In the first case, the agreement between the Office and Klinika was not prolonged. In the second, the petition of the building transfer to the Prague municipality was made impossible. In both cases, later events demonstrated that the "official" certificate or transfer did not exist or did not happen. The privileged access to information and the ability to "officially" prove it was used purposively at a very specific moment. It played an essential role in the existence of the social center and, in the end, made its continuation impossible. The complexity of the bureaucratic rules and regulations thus is not only what is hidden inside the

performative state, it can be also used in the course of a political battle. This type of domination—here I will call it *informational-bureaucratic domination* to make a distinction from general semantic domination—was discussed in previous research (Černý, Moskvina, and Böhmova: forthcoming). It demonstrates the double nature of the state: It is public, follows the rules, and presents itself as being in compliance with law. However, it is also discreet in its ways of finding proof of the reality which appears to be the most convenient for civil servants. The resistant tactics to this appear to be building wide structures that are able collect and quicky share information. However, critical actors will always be one step behind the institutional order in this field, since, in addition to other reasons, this field is created by the institutional order, and it controls the truth and reality tests it requires. Another side of this type of informational-bureaucratic domination is the unwillingness of state institutions to act under the justification of bureaucratic complexity, which requires numerous rules, regulations, and procedures to be completed before actual action can happen. For instance, in the case of Klinika, the initial purpose of the building (hospital) cannot be changed because the procedure is "highly complicated time-wise and, technically, it must include the agreement of the neighbors, firefighters, hygiene station." The Office cannot change the purpose of the building because it contradicts the state property law, a decision of the Government Transfer Committee is needed, and so on (ÚZSVM 2016a).

The second type of domination happens in the legal arena. Institutional actors are dominant in the legal arena because they tend to have more financial resources for better lawyers (especially, the Office, which is a public prosecutor of the state). Thus, they tend to use the courts for legal intimidation (Černý, Moskvina, and Böhmova: forthcoming). In addition to the previous type of domination, legal intimidation is based on the transfer of the critical actor to the legal field— again, more comfortable for dominant forces (domination by relocation). Lawsuits and the threat of possible fines described above were used as an intimidating technique as regards Klinika. Its intimidating rather than substantial nature is obvious from the accusations of illegal enrichment on the part of the anarchist anti-capitalist social center. And while the accusations might appear groundless, they still play an important role in spreading fear and in demotivating activists from taking further action. This legal repression is connected to informational-bureaucratic domination—privileged access to information and the ability to find "official" proof that can be used in the court by the dominant forces.

Finally, the case of Klinika unveils the change from police repression to economic repression. This type of domination is discussed both in academic debates (Černý, Moskvina, and

Böhmova: forthcoming) as well as in activist circles. The eviction by a private debt collector instead of police in the Klinika case is a good example of economic repression (or the "commodification of repression," as Arnošt Novák calls it (Novák 2019)). Possible fines for illegal enrichment were also connected to this threat of economic repression. This type of repression via fines substituted for the police violence usually present during squat evictions. In this case, the presence of the rental agreement for the building legalized the project but it also opened a pathway for the economic repression of an easily identifiable person who had entered the bureaucratic field. There are several problematic aspects here. The first is that this happens inside an arena in which the activists have no control (in the court as compared to the streets). Second, it is less visible; thus, it is not possible to bring about reputational risk as in the case of police violence. Third, it is oriented towards the individual and therefore fragmentizes the movement. Fourth, economic repression might lead to the commercialization of the movement, instigating revenue generating activities to cover the fines.

3.5. Autonomous activists: Three meanings of space and the limited means of resistance

For the state bureaucracy, changes in institutional politics and public justifications are important. But of great consequence to the autonomous movement is prefigurative politics and engagement in familiarity. Prefigurative politics, as discussed above, is based on the presupposition that the means are equal to the ends and that politics is done in the here and now. It is an ethics of everyday life, the micropolitics through which reproduction happens, as well as experimentation with the political frames that influence behavior and the diffusion of these frames. Prefiguration might be understood in terms of its function, strategical meaning, or as a timeframe that reconfigures the revolutionary future, but there is an essential need for space where prefiguration should be done. Space here is both an enabling and a limiting factor—it is an arena of political practice, but this arena is often temporal, and its temporality is unpredictable. This hides a risk: if there is no space, is there still prefiguration?

In this section, I analyze this type of politics as embedded in the familiar type of engagement which happens inside the social center. This level of analysis enables conclusions to be made about the organization of the movement, which is based on various cores (collectives/affinity groups) organized in one network (as Maeckelbergh pointed out (2011)). Besides being essential to prefigurative politics (enacting values), space reinforces organization—it is an incubator for the new collectives that physically organize themselves in the social center, which leads to the unification of the movement. It also serves a role as a mobilizing node—protecting

occupations are good chances to involve new people. This characteristic of space emphasizes its key strategic meaning for the movement, which was not sufficiently explored by the framework of prefiguration. Prefiguration instead focuses primarily on time, a definitive part of it, rather than space.

In the course of the public dispute, Klinika activists pragmatically justified the presence of the social center on the urban map and forced tests upon the state as owner. The distinction between different levels of engagements makes it possible to demonstrate that the autonomous movement uses the arguments pragmatically—the reformist critique of the state (radical reformism) is different from the engagement with radical transformative familiarity inside the social center (prefiguration). In this section, I start with the public justifications used by the activists in the public dispute, then I focus on the strategic meaning of space and engagement with familiarity. After, I analyze the meaning of urban space for the movement and finish with an exploration of the resistance tactics to the above-described informational domination and economic and legal repression.

3.5.1 Public justifications

Public justifications and a critique of the state owner of the building are used pragmatically by the activists, they do not represent the ideology of the movement. To put it in the words of one activist, "I think that [public critique] is some sort of legitimization. Klinika was an illegal project, beyond the law, so it had to justify itself in the media, to legitimate itself. This critique was a means for legitimation" (Respondent 3). There were two types of an argumentation: civic (tests that activists must pass in order to be legitimate as a civic actor) and market-industrial (efficiency and low cost of the project). What is peculiar about these tests is that activists create them themselves—they are not imposed on them by the institutional order. Instead, they take the organizational components of reality (tests) and use them creatively and pragmatically, making a parody of socially accepted civility, which is, however, still taken seriously by society. This knowledge of how to create and pass tests that are borrowed from an institutional order might be a further sign of post-autonomy as described elsewhere (Böhmová 2018).

Both of these tests are confirmatory reformist reality tests—they reassure the future reality (activists are a civic actor and they are efficient) through semantic rules that are implied in the institutional order. Civic justifications can usually be found in documents with higher requirements of civic worth (letters to politicians, petitions, open letters, press releases, etc.). Activists presented Klinika as a socially beneficial grassroots project that has meaning for local

citizens. For example, "artist and dancing workshops," "acoustic concerts," and free lectures as well as wide public support were mentioned in an open letter to government (Klinika collective 2015). At the assemblies of Prague city hall, civic values were also emphasized, such as openness, space based on solidarity, real democracy, tolerance, a place to meet and create that is lacking in Prague, existence of a freeshop where people with no money can get clothes, the involvement of homeless people (Minutes from the Prague city assembly meeting 2016). Because the position of the activists in the public dispute is not defined by law, they need to justify themselves within the civil order of worth via different means. This is done by establishing and passing civic tests:

a) petitions (in 2014 2,354 persons attested to their support for the project; in 2015, after the contract end, 4,154 people signed, and in 2016 more than 2,000 people supported the proposition of transfer—in the words of an activist, petitions are "material proof of support" (Respondent 8));

b) various open letters to decision-makers from persons or groups that are qualified in the opinion or civic orders (written by Czech writers and other cultural workers—Pavel Liška, Filip Remunda, Helena Třeštíková, Martin C. Putna, Václav Bělohradský, Tomáš Baldýnský—NGOs, or NGOs that work with migrants);

c) supportive emails from local citizens and the support of the local municipality; and

d) confirmations from the police about the absence of growth in the criminality rate of the area.

The market-industrial order of worth was supported by the narrative of young activists cleaning the building and transforming it into the social center, whereas the state had abandoned it. This idea generally looked so efficient that it was supported by Andrej Babiš (minister of finance at the time) who personally visited to the site. The project also looked efficient and clear enough for municipal politicians to support it: "It had a program, some framework in the beginning which made their position in the negotiations better" (Respondent 6). Activists justified their efficiency though actions: "We were clearing the building the whole day of trash. The building was nothing else, just an unusable and unsecure waste dump. In the evening, we secured the building via our own means and stayed in two rooms" (Klinika collective 2014b). Klinika's annual report, which itself is a qualified object in the industrial world (demonstrating the existence of a plan/project), in the civil world (demonstration of a civil activity), and public opinion (boosting credibility) emphasized cleaning, painting, repairs, and access to water and electricity. The initial project moreover qualified itself in the market order of worth—it was

based on donations and had a prepared budget of approx. 10,600 EUR (Světlík 2015). Test formats coming from the civic order and the market-industrial complex served as a basis to critique the state management of the property.

3.5.2 Critique of the state: Testing the managerial competences of the state and its public nature

Market-industrial complex put to the test: Existential and reality test

In addition to the tests that Klinika passes itself, there are also tests to which it puts the institutional order. The goal of this double testing is comparison: when the state is not legitimized in particular orders of worth, citizens might be. This type of critique challenges the hegemonic formation by questioning the capacities of dominant actors, but it remains within the general acceptance of the symbolic forms. Thus, it presents a case of radical reformism, which is as pragmatic as the tests to which Klinika puts itself.

The occupation itself and the activities of the activists (cleaning, building repairs, and social center program organization) presented a test to the owner—the state bureaucracy—as a manager of public property. As was discussed above, the state seeks to present itself as an efficient manager. However, urban space is not as easy to move as the market order presupposes; rather, it is hampered by bureaucratic rules and regulations which do not permit fast and efficient action. This fixedness of space within the networks of bureaucratic complexity and legal loopholes or in the processes of waiting for gentrification provides opportunity for the occupation, as well as for critique. Activists claim, "The state, more precisely, the Office for Government Representation in Property Affairs, which owns the building, de facto does not take care of it and has the majority of the responsibly for it" (Klinika collective 2014c). Both the state, in general, and projects specifically are criticized with professional arguments characteristic of the market-industrial complex. For example, the project of the new owner (the Railway Administration) has been criticized for its technical parameters (size of the building, poorly prepared project for the recontraction, non-compliance with the land use plan, missing documents from the construction department (Klinika collective 2018)). Moreover, the project has been criticized for being too expensive. The activists even involved a professional to prove the failure of the state to pass the test of a good price: "Reconstruction does not make sense even economically speaking." Peter Kareš, a specialist in renting housing from the advisory company JLL commented to the newspaper *E15*: "If it was for a usual commercial client, then we would not recommend reconstruction like that. It is about a long return and a probable

change in the needs of the area … or the costs which the owner must pay…. If we just count the return on investments, which was not counted by the Railway Administration, it will take around thirty-eight years, which is much more that a usual investment return" (Klinika collective 2018). This test presents a combination of existential logic (prior occupation, direct action that proves efficiency but is not defined by the semantic format coming from the institutional order) and the reformist logic of reality tests (qualified beings tested by the semantic rules of the institutional reality).

Public nature of the state put to the test: Existential test

There is however another test format which challenges the neoliberal state (as described above), its intensifying private character, and declining public functions. This type of test is existential and revolutionary in the sense that it questions the very nature of the state in today's capitalist Czech Republic via a direct action. This critique is situational too. It does not question just any state, but the particular one in which the case exists. It is, moreover, a part of the same parody of civility as the tests to which Klinika puts itself—it is pragmatic public justification used as a tactic.

What is tested in particular, it the public nature of state property. Activists claim that state property is open to citizen intervention as they have a right to be active in defining what is of public interest:

> The owner does not use its property rights, and this is even worse in the case of a state institution which is supposed to act in the public interest. It is strange that the owner acts in this way and wants the building to be abandoned again or to pay for its security using public funds … the purpose of this building should be a public question. I think that citizens can speak on this issue. This is not about ping-ponging the building between state organizations, our activities are the start of this discussion (Novák in Klinika collective 2014d).

What is in the "public interest" is a controversial question and, in different state institutions, is defined differently, according to the interviewees. The Office usually interprets it as providing land that serves for communications and public greenery. This is in contrast with activist post-autonomous thinking about the state (for more on the turn to post-autonomy in the Czech Radical Left, see Böhmová 2018): "I think that this is about showing that the state must serve people … and that public property is the property of all" (Respondent 4). Another activist adds,

"The state is something to which we all contribute, which must serve us because we are a part of it. So, the media legitimization was based on the idea that the state must provide the space to the citizens" (Respondent 3).

What is risky about the pragmatic use of the public justifications is that they do not represent an authentic critique and might cause discrepancy between the public image and the actual state of affairs:

> This [critique of the state] is a strategy. However, the line between authentic critique and strategy was never clear. It is hard to say where the authentic views stop and where the strategy begins. These types of argument were used in the court cases; this is something that was thought through before the debates, so that one could actually legitimize themself ... Later, these two dimensions started to separate from each other... Klinika from Facebook was very different from what was actually happening in the house. The discrepancy appeared, different worlds. (Respondent 8)

This existential test comes from the world (in comparison with reality) in Boltanki's sense (2011). Its format (occupation) comes from this choice over all other types of experiences and is not defined by semantic rules that are implied in the institutional order (in this case, it could be an application for a project, rent, etc.). The worth of a person in this test format is attached to all human beings who can participate in the creation of urban space (the world, politics) without regard for their institutional category (reality, police). Even when used pragmatically, it shows a fundamental ambiguity in what the public nature of the state means and demonstrates equality of access to urban space (Rancièrian notion of politics).

3.5.3 Legal and political language

As previously mentioned, the positions in the public disputes over urban space with the state departments are conditioned by law. There were two attempts made at creating a legitimate legal subjectivity. One was the decriminalization of squatting put forward by the Green Party (Stropnický in Sattler 2017), which was soon reconsidered as an overwhelmingly controversial topic without political gain (along with migration and gender). Another attempt to decriminalize squatting was acted upon by the squatters' lawyer, who tried to make the occupation a matter discussed in the court instead of an immediate police eviction based on the difference between the protection of property (a task of police) and the protection of property rights (violations of which must be decided in court) (Uhl 2015). Neither of these attempts were successful.

Missing legal subjectivity does not mean only that the activists cannot be a legitimate partner in the public disputes. Generally, it also reflects the one-sidedness of the public disputes, the lack of ways to meaningful engage in urban space, and the imbalance of power between citizens and the dominant institutions. What Boltanski describes as a form of relevant proof (rules, regulations) and qualified objects (rights, policies) (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006) in the civic order of worth not only serve an argument, but might also be used as a means against those who do not have a prior access to it. Inequality created through informational-bureaucratic domination is overcome via means of direct action and radical politics. Pragmatic sociology of critique does not elaborate on the importance of action in comparison to participation in disputes, which makes it an inconvenient analytical means to analyze activism.

First, activists point to the limitations of public disputes in general:

> We are always reminded that we have to promote our interests in the framework of established procedures of representative democracy; however, when we try to do that, nobody lets us get a word in […]. The whole assembly [public assembly at the local municipality] was a tragicomic demonstration of arrogance of power and undemocratic techniques from the side of politicians (Klinika collective 2016a).

In conditions when speech is not possible and argumentation is not considered, activists organize collective actions, that is, protests, occupations, urban interventions, and demonstrations. Demonstrations "lift up a discussion" (Respondent 8). Demonstrations, direct actions, and other types of urban interventions serve as bait for media that can reinforce the public discussion and provide visibility to the topics activists promote. As with the Office, performative logic plays an important role for activists. But it is risky. As mentioned above, too much focus on media might cause a discrepancy between the media image and the actual functioning (the problem of authentic critique). The second problem is that too much focus on media transfers activism to the symbolic world of signs, where there is no political organization and thus, no power. And while previous research claims that a dependency on the public image leads to bigger responsibility (Böhmová 2018), here I claim that the problematic aspect of it is that the media image vanishes, whereas the political structures remain (for more about the critique of direct actions and the need for structures, see Nunes 2021; Smucker 2014). This desire for media recognition (which is otherwise symptomatic of the civil service as well) is criticized by an activist:

> [We had] the feeling that important things are happening in media, we were a little
> bit trapped by the fact that, yes, we are bringing these things about, a change in the
> world through this—yes, we see it in the headlines… Maybe, sometimes, we could
> be more patient and instead of spectacular action, speak to the people (Respondent
> 6).

A political supporter also commented on the case and emphasized the lack of strategic and inclusive politics that would enlarge the movement:

> Did Klinika actually do enough strategy-wise to involve new people who are
> accepted, welcomed, inspired, interested? Did they do enough for this? Or it   was
> just about one building… What was it about in reality? … Sometimes, in the media
> we see an image that is independent from the actual activities. I ask—to what extent
> is this environment actually inclusive? I think it is also quite elitist. (Respondent 6)

Secondly, the limited discussion gives rise to the involvement of political language, which activists have mastered. This language puts politics above bureaucracy and states that politics is real while bureaucracy is substitutive of an actual discussion about urban space: "Real political interest can outweigh bureaucratic obstacles" (Klinika collective 2014e). This is a language of equality (in comparison with legal bureaucratic language that is unequal)—there are no limitations given by the institutional order in it (rules, regulations, requirements towards subjectivities). It is often supported by the politics of the streets—demonstrations, occupations, direct actions—and, in the case of Klinika, by the radical critique of the state and capitalism as well as reformist tests of the state. Establishing equality, an ability for those who have no part in discussion to partake (Rancière 2001) and for worth to be attached to those who have no worth in the bureaucratic arena (existence in the world, according to Boltanski (2011)), is an essential characteristic of the political arena created by activists. It leads to necessary conflicts which are at the core of politics. What is essential to political language and political action is its ability to relocate the dispute to the activist-controlled arena—to the street, to the open controversy about values to which civil servants are not used to. In the political arena, an-archy is established—a negation of the foundational ordering or principle (Devis 2010). It is an arena where the institutions as such are put to existential tests because their basic rules are shown as invalid and arbitrary. In the political arena there are other rules coming from the world of direct experience and confrontation. Below, an activist gives an example:

When the bombs were reported in the social center… My friend was on the roof. And then the head of the Office came … and she wanted to have negotiations. She knew the person on the roof was the one with whom the agreement was signed… so she was carried to the roof by this… forklift… and she was up, on the roof level, trying to persuade my friend to come down and to have negotiations. This is how the meetings looked like. These were the most beautiful moments for us, that we had pushed the civil servants to enter this field. It is just like in Rancière, that you sabotage the rules of the game, turn them over. (Respondent 5)

"Beautiful moments" are for the political movements when the activists have the power to define the arena and the rules of dispute—they have more power than the civil servants, they become the dominant social actors in the political arena. In doing so, they put the order to another existential test, this time the bureaucratic order of the state as such by employing a different language for which to speak to it. This conflictual ideological language and direct actions are recognizable to an institutional order; there are not pre-established test formats for them. While being singular, they "open up a path to the world" (Boltanksi 2011: 108). Here, it is worth returning to Boltanski's description of existential tests, especially with regard to his point about "the joy created by transgression," or "beautiful moments" as the activist put it. "Existential tests are based on experiences, like those of injustice or humiliation, sometimes with the shame that accompanies them, but also, in other cases, the joy created by transgression when it affords access to some form of authenticity" (Boltanksi 2011: 107).

The head of the press department of the Office commented on the activists' power to transfer the dispute into the political arena and explained why the Office used political arguments in the discussion: "You and your friend, who came up with these arguments, … you threw it on to us, and we must react" (Ležatka in A2larm 2016). Moreover, political events are more attractive to journalists in comparison with other arenas like bureaucracy or law. An activist continues:

The strategy of the Railway Administration (SŽDC) was to threaten us with fines; they did not want to talk to us. It was more clever because the head of the Office was talking to the mass media in a very stupid manner, and when it was the moment of ideological confrontation, she was losing. The Railway Administration limited all discussion to the legal discourse, and they wiped us out… Media were not interested in this anymore. (Respondent 5)

Klinika as a political event also demonstrated the political opinions of the Office employees. In an interview for *Alarm*, the head of the Office spoke about the center hosting "people who speak English," "laundry without an inspection," problems with hygiene and security around the social center, inequality with other NGOs that follow the rules and regulations while Klinika does not, and its connection to extremism (Arajmu in A2larm 2016). These arguments, as is shown later in this thesis, are the arguments used by right-wing conservatives (mainly, the Civic Democratic Party; ODS) that delegitimize all types of activism (to such an extent that cyclists are called fascists and ecological organizations are enemies of urban development).

3.5.4 Familiar engagement and the strategic meaning of space

While public justifications and the critique of the state were used pragmatically to acquire and sustain the space, what was important to the activists themselves was what was happening on the level of familiar engagement—inside the social center. Here, I put two engagements—in a plan and in familiarity—together because familiarity is used as a tactics. The main values of the movement such as autonomy and self-management are practiced on this level of engagement, and, at the same time, this practice is a tactic of achieving those values. Here the social center plays an essential role in the prefiguration—enacting bits of the future here and now and practicing non-hierarchical politics is not possible without a space (which also brings about the risk of prefigurative politics disappearing with the space). On this level, personal ties lead to the genesis of new organizational cores (collectives) and to the mobilization of new members, which in turn leads to consolidation of the movement. Coming back to Yates's argument that prefiguration plays a role in a movement's reproduction and mobilization (2020), in this case it is visible that space plays a key role (thus, it also plays a key role in prefigurative politics). In other words, for a movement to consolidate and grow, more people must be willing to engage in familiarity with the existing members and with each other (come to a social center, make friends, organize into collective, etc.) In what follows, first, I speak about the meaning of autonomy and its connection to space and engagement with familiarity and, second, about the strategic meaning of space.

Autonomy is not an ideational notion but rather a practice. As mentioned elsewhere (Novák 2017; Novák and Kuřík 2019), the politics done by the autonomous movement is the politics of the act, which means that values are not demanded but lived-through on the level of everyday practice (engagement in familiarity). And to live values, one needs space. To demonstrate that the values are actual reality, not just ideas, one also needs space. Activists explained this connection between values and space:

Through the micro example of Autonomous Centre Klinika, we show the theory and practice of autonomous politics, which seeks to develop direct action, self-government, and solidarity; autonomous politics that tries to be radical, but also relevant; autonomous politics that expands the limits of the possible and transforms social relations based on equality, mutual help, and personal and collective autonomy; autonomous politics driven from morality and which is strategic, but not moralizing and impotent; autonomous politics which is practical, limited and which gives hope; autonomous politics for which the means are the goal. (Klinika collective 2016b)

This quotation also brings us back to the above-defined prefigurative politics. Indeed, as Yates (2020) claims, the space of/for prefiguration is a space of political experimentation ("politics that expands the limits of the possible"), development of new frames, transformation of social relationships, and practice of desired forms of conduct (mutual help, solidarity). The non-linear timeframe Krøijer (2015) pointed at is also present—the values of autonomous politics, self-government, and solidarity are not the values of the future but those that are bit by bit reproduced in the present. Rather than being framed within a "process of reassurance" (Gordon: 2018: 11), the future seems to be generative here as it shapes the political experience in the present.

However, here I would like to make a remark on the notion of future. Whether we consider the future as able to appear in the present or not (or if we accept a plurality of futures of a different nature), there is a particular future that still remains as reality-to-come. Activists saying the future is here and now does not change this fact. Indeed, as Gordon points out (2018), this future reality appears to be toxic—it is embedded in crises and fear. The climate crisis, housing crisis, migration and war, floods, draughts, and viruses are elements of the future that prefigure themselves in our lives today just as left-wing politics does. Combined with a deflation of certainties (e.g., the strengthening neoliberalization of states means they are no longer able to guarantee ontological security in forms such as stable and sufficient pensions, social support, housing support, etc.), these crises downplay expectations and beliefs that tomorrow will be better than today (or even could be). Is a transfer of very limited bits of future into the present a solution in this case? Or is it an escape into the general melancholia and inability of the Left to reinterpret revolution as a goal and a project and an exploration of its temporal parameters instead? One must be very careful not to create a synecdoche while speaking about the temporality of revolution instead of revolution itself and, at the same time, abandoning the

discussion over its goals and presupposing that they are a given instead (autonomy, self-governance, mutual help, etc.)

Another important point to make here is about the connection between the space and prefigurative politics. As I have already stated several times, one needs a space for prefiguration. Urban space however becomes a matter of commodification and financialization. It is one of the best assets for gaining enormous profit, as was discussed in the previous chapters. Squats and social centers in the urban neoliberal reality-to-come are pushed out of the cities because land is one of the most precious commodities. Social centers appear in the grey zones of legal and bureaucratic orders and, as such, are often temporal. As the Klinika activists claimed, after the eviction of the social center, the movement became fragmented—people did not meet each other as often, and personal networks between collectives weakened. Sustaining autonomous zones in cities (and movement as such) require the activists' strategy to target a larger mass movement (meaning, they must operate on the horizon of expectations that bring people hope about tomorrow) or/and build wider coalitions with those actors who fight for the decommodification of urban space. Otherwise, there may be no space for prefigurative politics. A question to be answered by prefigurative politics scholars then is how autonomous movements react to the development of neoliberal urbanism.

Returning to the notion of engagement with familiarity, one must note that practical politics is developed on the basis of everyday practices and relationships between people—familiarity is transformative, it is itself politics that redefines the basis of social organization (radical familiarity). In reference to the above-described theory, affinity is understood as a redefinition of the whole social fabric into just terms (social revolution in contrast with political revolution) and as the construction of a new non-institutionalizable Self appears on the level of physical closeness in one space. One activist explained the basic values of the project:

> It was about the realization of anarchist principles, an effort at prefiguration to live
> the anarchist world at least in this house. … When it functioned, it was about people
> coming and being able to live feminism in practice… [Sexists] were excluded or at
> least it was solved in one way or another… and this is not about feminism, but about
> many things like that … democracy was realized in the assemblies. (Respondent 3)

The strategic function of space is interconnected with engagement with familiarity. It is important to note that the non-parliamentary left-wing scene is fragmented into collectives with different ideologies, different short-term goals and tactics, but a similar anti-capitalist vision.

In this context, the space was essential for movement consolidation. It was important publicly, as a "flagship" heralding the presence of the movement on the urban map (Pixová and Novák 2016) and a "talking head of the movement" in the media discourse (Respondent 3). For the movement itself, the social center was a place where people from different branches of the Left could physically meet. It was an important organizational node—it provided space for the intertwinement of ideas, the creation of new collective (organizational cores). Connections between these organizational cores are not "weak organizational ties" (Císař 2017: 188) as they exist in NGOs. These connections are based on affinity, and their network is the movement itself. It was a catalyst of new social networks upon which the social movement is based. During its existence, this house helped to build a dense and wide network of relationships, which attracted more and more people. This network demonstrates that the ideas of autonomy and solidarity are attractive and are not just idealistic slogans.

Space also serves a role as a mobilizational node. It calls for engagement into the space-making: "Klinika lived through the second day, but it still needs you. … without you, Klinika will not survive!" (Klinika collective 2017)).

On the other hand, embedding politics in everyday life runs the risk of transforming all of life into a fight:

> This has been two years of permanent stress [being an activist in ASC Klinka]. We were able to stand up in a totally asymmetric conflict: On the one side, there are politicians and bureaucrats who fight Klinika during their working time. On the other side, there is a collective of people fighting in its' free time, people who have work, school, private lives. Some have a family, children, and, at the same time, they have to collect money for lawyers, etc. Despite this, we have managed to resist the willfulness of the state for two years already. (Novák in Rychlíková 2018)

Another risk is the boundaries between politics and familiarity. Sometimes, these become too blurred, which might create hierarchies based on authenticity among those who live in a social center and those who do not, leading to an erosion in the procedures of direct democracy:

> These squatters who live an authentic life in a squat… through this they gain a feeling of superiority towards people who do not live there, who do not have this authentic way of living … for me, it was an important moment… when inside of this "housing" logic, they start to say that there is no need for assemblies, that

everything could be solved through the course of everyday life in the house. This was a moment which excluded people from the decision-making process that were there once a week. This was a moment of tension for me. (Respondent 8)

3.5.5 Space as a matter to be defended, as a site of organization and politics of the act

Summarizing the previous arguments, it is possible to distinguish between three different meanings of urban space for the autonomous movement based on the formats of engagement. On the level of public engagement in justification, the space is a matter to be defended through pragmatic arguments. It has a civic and market-industrial value. It is public, efficient, and cheap. This characteristic also serves as the basis for the critique of the state, which is presented as closed, technocratic, and inefficient as regards urban space management. Moreover, the space serves as proof of the movement's civil values on the urban map, which is essentially for the autonomous movement:

> [Klinika is] proof of the fact that social relations can be based on solidarity, cooperation, mutual help; self-government and selflessness are not empty declarations on paper, but a realty which can be found in everyday relations. (Novák 2014)

On the strategic level, space plays a role in the movement's consolidation. The new organizational cores (collectives) appear in the center, and new people are mobilized through it. In regard to familiar engagement, space makes prefigurative politics possible. Without a social center, there is no material space where autonomy and self-management can be practiced.

It is also worth noting that the activists use pragmatically the fixedness of urban space within the networks of bureaucracy, law, and unclear ownership. In a sense, social centers appear on the edges of an institutional order, in the holes or cracks that the institutional order inevitably produces. An institutional order is not and never will be able to grasp the complete world of experience. It probably cannot grasp urban space in its entirety either. This provides an opportunity to explore the spatiality of critique; however, one must note that the capitalist urban order tends to become more and more consolidated over time, as was noted in the text above.

The analytical tools of pragmatic sociology help demonstrate that different levels of engagement give the space different meaning. Moreover, it shows that, on the basis of a public discourse analysis, it is not possible to grasp the ideology of the autonomous movement—many arguments are used pragmatically to justify the space's existence. What is also clear from this

analysis is that not only arguments but language plays a role in public disputes. The legal and bureaucratic language (to which Boltanski and Thévenot refer when they speak of a civic order of worth (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006)) limits activists, who then try to overcome this via political language supported by direct actions. While political language seeks to find equality, in contrast to unequal bureaucratic language, direct actions pull attention towards topics and help reopen a dispute. However, the movement's important values do not lie on the level of public justification, but rather are embedded in engagement with radical familiarity, which also has a strategic meaning. Here, the analytical tools proposed by Thévenot appear to be extremely beneficial (Thévenot 2007, 2014, 2019).

3.5.6 Lacking the means of resistance

Above I discussed the notion of domination, which has a twofold meaning: Firstly, there is domination by relocating a dispute to an arena more comfortable to the dominant forces (the bureaucratic, legal, and economic domination of institutions that can afford legal suits and lawyers, in turn making possible economic violence). Secondly, there is domination inside these arenas, which was already described above. Thus, the tactic of resistance is also twofold.

Resistance to the transfer of disputes to arenas the dominant forces find comfortable happens through the politicization of the dispute and its transfer to the political arena, a field created by activists and in which they are dominant. In the case of Klinika, activists claimed that the case was political and supported its politicization through the general critique of the state and capitalism. This critique creates a conflict which is essential to the understanding of the political (Rancière 2001). The conflict takes place in the streets, during occupations and demonstrations and during the public disputes about values (see below). Some direct actions are attractive to media, which opens possibilities for the activists' arguments to be articulated. None of these means are available to dominant forces operating on the basis of rules and regulations inside bureaucracy and law. Moreover, as the case shows, urban space is the only arena where activists can win because they control the tactics—direct actions, collective actions, and other urban interventions. The case shows that the building occupation (a political action of equality and an actualization of the right to the city) combined with an attractive narrative of creative efficient youth and that passes civic tests (demonstrations, petitions, letters), all of which make support for the center visible, played a key role in its sustainability.

Resistance to domination in arenas where the dominant forces are comfortable, as they retain control of the tactics/language used in these arenas, appears to be much harder. Firstly, as

already mentioned, this is due to informational-bureaucratic domination—an ability of state institutions to create "official" proof, a confirmation of reality which suits only one side of the dispute, and to use bureaucratic complexity as justification for an unwillingness to act. The case of Klinika shows that activists are learning the language of this arena and can propose arguments based on careful analysis of urban plans and regulations. They use managerial and professional language, involve urban development specialists, and so on. However, in comparison with the state, they do not have privileged access to the proof produced by state— real or not. Arguments coming from the market-industrial complex in this case did not play an essential role in the course of the dispute in comparison to the state's ability to find confirmation at key moments in the dispute. The building approval certificate led to termination of the agreement, while the alleged transfer of the building to another state department circumvented the petition to transfer the building to the municipality. By turning towards this language, the activists allow politics to return to the bureaucratic arena, which political actors cannot dominate. It turns political language into technocracy, arming the dominant institutional actors. Those actors are then free to use the complexity of bureaucratic rules, hidden away from the lay people to state that things cannot be done and confirm it through documents and certificates that they themselves create based on their close knowledge of rules and procedure. This is the essence of semantic domination—ownership of the test formats through which reality is proved (Boltanski 2011). It is highly questionable to which extent these types of depoliticized fights are winnable. Contrarywise, a transfer to this arena is risky to actors whose raison d'être is based on politics.

The same argument goes for the legal arena, which is interconnected with economic repression. Dominant forces use courts as an intimidating technique, with fines as a novel type of threat and oppression. The case of Klinika shows that the activists tend to have good lawyers, but even they cannot stop the state from legal intimidation; they only provide protection from the worst possible scenarios. The case demonstrates that a legal change is not possible without wider societal change. It could not be done by one lawyer in a context where squatting is considered controversial and is not supported by even allied politicians. Moreover, it is hardly to   be done in a post-socialist society penetrated by privatism and the dogmatic protection of private property (Hirt 2012). What is essential for this type of domination it that it is individualizing and erodes the meaning of collective action—the main means of resistance for social movements. This implies two outcomes:

Firstly, the classic means of resistance, usually used against police (e.g., passive resistance), cannot be used here. A debt collector or a judge does not come to the street to give the fine. The procedure happens behind the closed doors of the court. Debt collectors and judges do not drag activists out of buildings, and, in this sense, they are invisible. In the case of Klinika, after eviction by the debt collector, several people stayed on the roof for ten days to demonstrate resistance. However, this is a tactic usually applied in cases where physical removal from a space takes place—activists protect the space with their bodies. Here, nobody came to remove them. The building had already been evicted. Fines were about to be issued. The meaning of passive resistance was not clear even for some activists themselves. In such a manner, one activist emphasized that passive resistance was not used as a tactic of resistance to oppression but as a way to gain popularity inside the movement itself:

> To stay on the roof [during the executor eviction] for one week was absurd. In that context, they wanted to break the record [of a different squatters' collective] who stayed [on a roof of a different squat] for six days. It was just a few months after that… that they stayed on this roof in the cold. (Respondent 8)

Besides this unclear connection between tactics of repression (economic violence) and resistance to repression (passive resistance, occupation), there is another problematic aspect. The idea behind passive resistance to police or security companies is to put them at reputational risk, to demonstrate that they are violent forces dragging young people into vans and bringing them to police stations. This is why police interventions are usually recorded. When it comes to eviction by debt collector and economic repression in general, there is a very low possibility to create reputational risk for the dominant actors. This could not be created through passive resistance because debt collectors do not apply violence. Noncompliance is not understandable to the general public, as another activist claimed:

> [This tactic] was really bad. It was useless and counterproductive, because this execution cost a lot of money, probably because it lasted for many days due to these people on the roof. It was poorly communicated to the media; it had no message, and many people did not understand why they were there. (Respondent 3)

Secondly, economic repression might lead to a change in the activities of the movement. Some activists complained that with the threat of fines, the activities at Klinika became more commercial and served the purpose of collecting money. This also meant a change in

program—over the course of time, there tended to be more parties aimed at profit-making instead of educational or other activities that do not earn income.

3.6. Municipal politicians

In comparison with departments of the state and the autonomous movement, municipal politics is not a consistent actor but rather an arena where political conflicts take place. Thus, I call it an arena of municipal politics. And while using "politics" I imply institutional politics, the order of police in the Rancièrian sense, because it is an institutional reality but not the world in Boltanski's sense. Klinika, as a political event, made conflicting imaginations about urban space more vivid. On the basis of analyzed texts written by both supporters and opponents of Klinika and interviews with the local politicians, I distinguish between two orders. Again, it is not possible to attach these orders to a single order of worth, rather, they represent compromises. The first order of justification, mainly articulated by opponents, is a compromise between the civic (equality defined by rules, laws), market (worth of price and the free market) and industrial orders (efficient management of space). The second, articulated by supporters, is a compromise between the civic (equality of engagement in urban space between citizens and other social actors), domestic (proximate space), and inspired orders (activists as creative beings; the possibility to take part in urban space creation is based not on the basis of official status but on the basis of emotional involvement and enthusiasm). As in the previous examples, there are different elements of the orders that appear to be important for analysis, not whole grammars. In the analyzed case, the main difference between both is in qualified beings: those who are justified to make interventions into urban space, in other words, those who have a right to the city. Activism (and civil actors in general) becomes an important topic because there are parties with ideological positions connected to support (Green Party) or a critique of activism (ODS). A second important category are developers as qualified beings, as well as the rules and regulations applied to them. Both sides of the conflict support their claims with test formats. The Klinika case, in this way, emphasized the two orders present in municipal politics (made clear through the wider range of data included in the analysis—in this regard, Facebook posts are very helpful). Moreover, it made obvious two imaginations about politics: technocratic-efficient and ethico-civic. The first is related to the undisputable good of the law (especially private property law via its connection to freedom, a connection often seen as natural by neoliberals) and of the free market. The free market is perceived as an element situated outside of society, the functioning of which is seen to be as just as the justice of natural law (hence why developers are qualified beings in comparison to squatters in all cases). This understanding is

based on a vision of politics as an efficient technology that activists cannot master (thus, it is technocratic). In this framework, confirmation is applied: reality tests question the worth of civic actors (e.g., Klinika's legal status) but confirm the tests formats as such (e.g., civic actors must meet the legal requirements). In doing so, these reality tests validate the reality that is already constructed. The second imagination is related to ethics and a consideration of good and bad in relation to the singularity of being that commits deeds; thus, activists, even when breaching the law, might be ethically right (for the distinction, see section 1.3.2). This political imagination has a metapragmatic critical character—the relevance of the applied order in the situation is questioned, and the reality tests themselves are a target of critique. In the metapragmatic register, critique questions *the process* whereby Klinika acquired an order of worth and the procedure of worth acquirement by the civil actors active in the urban terrain in general.

One must add here, that transcendency is not compatible with democracy, which exists when people understand that the institutional order is created by them and not by a transcendental force such as history, God (Castoriadis 1997), or, in the case of neoliberalism, the free market or law. The presence of the technocratic-efficient and ethico-civic political imaginations contradict the previous findings stating that municipal politics is rather more pragmatic than ideological (section 1.4.) and emphasizes that ideology becomes visible throughout the course of a political event. In the case of Klinika, the conflict is mainly about stances concerning the civil sphere and the conditions under which urban interventions can be made. I will start with an elaboration of these stances and then go on to a more general description of municipal politics today, its change from the 1990s, and its internal conflicts.

3.6.1 Technocratic-efficient order and developers as qualified beings
Political opponents based their critique of ASC Klinika on a pure vision of the civil sphere seen as defined by rules, regulations, and laws which are necessary for equality (rules and laws are the same for all civil actors). Through this, they also make and protect the demarcation of their political position. However, the opponents' discourse is essentially neoliberal because, while limiting civil actors, it seeks to deregulate market actors (developers). Thus, freedom is attached to the market order of worth, not the civic. In this section I investigate these arguments and, in the section that follows, analyze the supporters' justification.

Firstly, according to the opponents, mainly (neo)liberal conservative parties, civil society cannot be political. Opponents of Klinika condemned it for being a political project, by which

they meant that it was supported by some politicians and political parties or had a clear ideological stance (or even was "a sign of class struggle," as the mayor of Prague 3 claims (Ptáček 2016a)). Being political and being a civil actor is not compatible in this order:

> Sometimes, I hear that Klinika is an NGO for migrants …. or [that it is] "a representative of the civil solidarity." No. Klinika is a political project … that seeks to "confront the state and the capitalist system." (Ptáček 2016b)

Political support or ideology means that the project is not a citizens' initiative but is situated in the grey area between politics and civil society. Opponents of Klinika, on the contrary, seek to establish very clear divisions between the job of a politician and laypeople from the civil sphere: "[This politician] is in opposition now, and he still acts like an activist. The problem is when people like this get into coalition … but they still act like activists" (Respondent 24). The opponents condemn the existence of grey areas. To prove that these distinctions are real, they use rules and regulations created by institutional politics and the state such as legal subjectivity, hygiene norms, and NGO requirements, which Klinika was not fulfilling—this last argument was especially popular. Again, Boltanski's categories of qualified objects serve as a means of domination. They dictate the state of affairs and the engagement of actors. Civil actors who follow the rules as made by institutional politics are those who are qualified to be a part of civil society. By establishing these rules, the dominant actors control the civil sphere, make particular projects possible and others impossible, and protect the division between itself and its power and a depoliticized civil sphere that is not supposed to have power. To put it in the words of a right-wing municipal politician: "I think that NGOs are not supposed to have any power" (Respondent 24). The means of informational-bureaucratic domination in these conditions become easily accessible to the dominant forces. But what is more important is that this type of order seeks to put any type of civil experience into a given category, so there is no experience which is unnamed—this is what Boltanski calls totality, an order without incompliance between reality and the world (Boltanski 2011). In other words, this is an order with no critique. Chaos and anarchy is condemned by opponents as the non-existence of rules: "Is the road of chaos and non-compliance with rules the way we want to live?" (Hujová 2016b). Ironically, according to Richard Day, this is exactly the chaos and disorder (anarchy) that leads to anarchism (the just society) (2005). Nonetheless, this calls attention to the reason why NGO-ization and transactional activism ("organized civil society" (Císař 2013b: 79)) is so widespread in states where the neoliberal shock doctrine in urban space management was applied in the 1990s, and its outcomes remain visible (Pixová 2020). Neoliberalism is based on carefully created rules

for the civil sphere—construction of the subject via hegemonic forces (colonization, following Kropotkin (Kropotkin in Day 2005: 114))—and the dismantling of rules for private developers. It creates the NGO as a form. This form limits the radical forces of resistance (anti-capitalist activists, collective action, mass organizations) (for more on the a neoliberal paradox whereby it claims to diminish the rules but is actually based on them, see Nunes 2021). The conceptualization of the civil sphere by situating it on the mezzo-level, with "more or less professional policy and social advocates" (Císař 2013a: 139–140) encapsulates activism in social forms that are given by rules and regulations created in the technocratic-efficient order. The characterization of the Czech Republic as being a representative rather than participatory democracy also suits this order quite well. The following quotation from the former Prague 3 mayor demonstrates the perception of civil society in the eyes of its opponents—the word "users" here especially emphasizes the accepted civic activity, that is, users of services:

> The users of Klinika … usually come to the district government to ask for support. But they do not want to be a part of a system of support provided to NGOs. Klinika does a lot of interesting activities… which other NGOs cannot do because … in comparison to Klinika, which does not have a legal subjectivity, they must obey rules. (Hujová in Radniční noviny 2016)

Secondly, and following from the first, activism in general is delegitimized. Opponents of Klinika use terms like "authentic supporters of activists, homeless, and kittens"; "Prague under the siege of activists"; "new green, gender, and pan-European totalities"; "red-green radicals"; "activist buck-passing instead of politics"; "pressure, yelling, and crying used to put pressure by the groups that enforce whatever they want"; "cyclo-fascists"; and so on. Political enemies are called activists: "The Pirates did nothing in Prague… they are just activists without a program. They do harm to Prague because they don't work" (Respondent 24). Activists are usually portrayed as those who block development and are incapable of rational discussion—their speech is *phōné* not *logos* in Rancièrian terms. The risk connected to the rise of activism is that "civil society will start to rule all of us … which will lead to the total destruction of the whole system" (Respondent 24). The arena in which the activists are strong (the politics of the streets) is what is particularly condemned in this type of justification. The politics of the streets is seen as dangerous and unjustified. In comparison with institutional politics and high-ranking politicians, the politics of the streets and lay citizens are delegitimized, emotional, irrational, and irresponsible. After far-right groups attacked Klinika, the former mayor of Prague 3 claimed:

The solution of the migration crisis cannot be done on the streets and endanger the citizens. This is the task of the high-ranked politicians to responsibly solve this issue in cooperation with the EU. … It is not possible to solve the issue on the basis of emotions … we need to find rational solutions… On the one hand, we see an extreme of fear and hate, on the other, of naïve openness. We should not allow these extremes to appear on the streets and to endanger the citizens. (Hujová 2016a)

Not only is the politics of the streets condemned in this order but also political conflict in general. This will be discussed in the upcoming sections on domination by agreement, which is present in urban municipal governance today. Here, it is important to emphasize that critique, the questioning of values and discussion about situational good and evil that goes beyond the law (ethics), is condemned. "Systematic solutions" are substituted by people "telling us how we must behave" (Respondent 24). Politics thus becomes a matter of following rules and regulations, a technology. As a representative of the Prague 3 municipal government states:

This [Klinika case] is not a discussion about good. In our society of freedom and democracy … there are some rules … which I think are good because the Czech Republic and Europe and the whole world, in which life is good, … are beginning to change exactly because the rules are broken and the main values are being destabilized. (Bellu in the minutes of the Prague city assembly meeting 2016: 104)

The Klinika project does not pass several tests that the technocratic-efficient urban imagination requires. Importantly, the technocratic-efficient order contains reality tests which aim to confirm the test formats in general and question the worth of the social center in particular. Firstly, as a political project that seeks to "confront the state and the capitalist system," to put it again in the words of the Prague 3 mayor, Klinika does not pass the test of depoliticized civility. Moreover, it does not pass the test of equality—while all other non-commercial projects obey rules, it is not clear to Klinika's opponents why the activists do not want to do so (have legal subjectivity, rent a building, apply for a grant; the proof of their existence is an action rather than a formal category). Here, the test formats embedded in reality must prove that the civil actor is not political and has a particular organizational and legal form. Secondly, the opponents tried to put the Klinika's reputation and civility into question. The project is uncivil because it receives complaints from neighbors (tests of equality and reputation). It is disqualified due to its connection to extremism and radical activism—it was mentioned in a report on extremism issued by the Ministry of the Interior (test of reputation / civility). It is

visible here how security service (or police) documents might create and guard the line between civility and incivility in the technocratic-efficient (neoliberal) order. Worth to note, that activists as well required statistics on criminalization from police and used the information they received (criminal rates did not grow with the appearance of the center) as a proof of civility. Finally, after the termination of the agreement, the project shifted to be beyond the law as it was breaching the property rights of the state—this argument was the most visible in the liberal conservative public critique of the center. It is notable here that there is no difference between public and private property in this case, with the opponents often comparing it to squatters occupying "your house while you are on vacation." Again, breaching private property law presents a failed test of civility which, in general, maintains the dominant order that connects the inviolability of private property and civility together. Domination of private property over all other types of property is also obvious in these tests.

Here, it is important to explain why this order is neoliberal. Whereas it dictates rules and arenas to civic engagement, it provides freedom to developers who are qualified to build cities in the context of the free market and private property (the market order of worth). Together with politicians, they control the process of urban planning and are thus qualified in the industrial order of worth, especially, in comparison to activists who allegedly block construction (see below). Civic actors must pass civic order tests (requirements for official status) and must not intervene in politics. Based on these tests, these actors are rather abstract, legal, or official categories rather than local citizens. For developers, on the contrary, the rules must be made easier so they can build (e.g., opponents call for simpler construction laws). In this case, the rules are not seen as qualifying objects but as obstacles to freely circulating goods (real estate). In this order, space formation is global, as is the capital used by the developers. Interconnectedness between municipal politics and developers is not limited to public justifications but exists also on the level of familiar engagement. Whereas previous research shows that there are activists who enter politics to open the political opportunity structure for other activists (Pixová 2018), in this research, some of the respondents with previous experience in development entered politics to open the political opportunity structure for developers. Their everyday work thus serves the purpose of making the implementation of private interests in the city easier.

This raises a question about municipal politics in general. Since it is used as a means by both anti-capitalist activists and capitalists, it could be characterized as an empty arena which does not have political autonomy but is used as a means by different groups to reach their goals. This

characteristic of local politics helps to develop the notion of lacking political autonomy caused by informal connections between the economic and political spheres specific to post-socialist capitalism (Bandelj 2016). Returning to neoliberal urbanism, we can say that empty municipal politics is filled with different (personal/political) interests, and its consequent lack of autonomy is one of the processes that reinforces neoliberalization. As regards weak municipalities and unregulated development, there is an obvious imbalance of power or indeed a shifted locus of power from local governments to free market actors. The local politicians claimed that the weakness of the municipalities is (among other things) due to the fact that they have no property, which ties together politics and ownership and makes politics impossible without ownership. This state of affairs, following thirty years of privatization, weakens local autonomy even further and makes it more vulnerable to continued neoliberalization.

Neoliberalization actors use the technocratic-efficient discourse to justify themselves and exclude others. They denounce politicized civility and the political civil sphere; activism connected to emotions, demonstrations, and blockages; conflictual stances; free play with organizational forms; and experimentation in urban terrain.

3.6.2 Ethico-civil order and citizens as qualified beings

The political supporters of the activists (mainly, the Green Party), contrarywise, see engagement in urban space without strict regulations as beneficial, and they appeal to the difference between ambivalent law and legitimacy as well as to situational common sense. They propose the regulation of developers instead of citizens. It is ethical because it applies "optional rules" and sees deeds "in relation to the ways of existing involved" (Deleuze 1995: 100): sometimes laws are wrong and activists are right. It is civil because, rather than seeing efficiency in urban management, it emphasizes citizen engagement. This type of politics opens the political structure to urban activists—thus, not just any kind of structure is open or closed; it is a particular order of justice articulated in the arena that can meet the activists' justifications. The new municipalism discussed in section 1.4. has some similarities with this order, mainly concerning the transformation of municipal institutions towards more possibilities for citizen engagement.

Firstly, the political supporters of Klinika generally support urban interventions by citizens. They emphasize personal involvement in the creation of the city, community life, and activism in general (especially, the ecological movement). Rather than speaking about rules, they speak about equality in regard to urban space involvement, for example, politics connected to

redistribution (of flats to civil servants); to the articulation of affordable housing for students, pensioners, and support for the homeless; to calls for participation in petition actions; and so on. As a matter of involvement, urban space has local and anchoring characteristics found in the domestic order of worth. It is a space of protection and attachment (protected by petition, etc.). The civic value of Klinika (mainly, supported through its activities) and its domestic value (communal life, importance to the locality) come together:

> I am convinced that Klinika comes out of the same values upon which a functional and health city is based. These are the values of … solidarity, mutual help, tolerance, and openness, a desire to understand the local world and the global connections which are forming our lives. These are the values that Klinika brings to Žižkov. It demonstrated this by its openness to all social groups, the huge variety of socially beneficial activities, and humanitarian help to people escaping from war (Rut in the minutes of the Prague 3 municipal district assembly 2016).

The involvement of citizens in local, proximal, and anchoring space also brings with it the ability to create and change the city through grassroots initiatives and active citizens. This gives the space a characteristic of inspired order, where citizens are qualified as creative beings due to their emotional connection to the locality. On the contrary, technocracy is criticized for being normalizing or putting too much accent on effectivity. What follows from this is a more general critique of rules and regulations. The supporters of Klinika criticize the informational-bureaucratic domination. They condemn the state and the opponents for using rules and regulations as a political means:

> It is looking very curiously like the right-wing politicians are using bureaucracy and administrative regulations, permissions, stamps, and intimidation to evict the project. The kids' corner without an administrative permission, this is something terrible. (Ferjenčík in the minutes of the Prague City Assembly 2016).

The supporters of Klinika claim (as do the activists themselves) that there is a difference between law and legitimacy, and the law might be subject to change. The ethico-civil order here is a metapragmatic order. The reality tests have a metapragmatic critical format—they question *the process* by which worth is attached to persons and to the tests formats themselves. They ask whether those involved in city creation respect the correct requirements and whether we attach worth to urban actors in a correct manner. This stance is explained by the fact that existing law in today's society is interpreted as a law that supports the capitalist order, meaning that in

particular cases law may be biased (without condemnation for the rule of law in general). For example, private property law and new construction law in the Czech Republic are written in a way that benefits developers. Commenting on this, a local politician stated, "I know these people [who have written the law]. These are the ones who want to build faster and higher. So, they can earn their money" (Respondent 6). This means, that the law does not have a transcendental character. Rather, it is situational and must be interpreted differently in different circumstances. One of the goals of politics is to see this bias in laws and to find the "balance between forces" in contexts when capitalist forces are stronger (Respondent 6). A critique of this law itself becomes a matter of political struggle. In the following justification for Klinika, the ethical appeal is clear:

> The one who is blind puts the law higher than the human herself. We must ask, what is more important for us? What is legal or what is legitimate? What is in accordance with the law of what is just? The moment the law functions against a human and the good functioning of society, it is legitimate to take a stand of civil resistance. The border where it is right to take this stand it not clear, and it is not defined by any law. And the Klinika collective takes all responsibility for it. (Rut 2016)

The discussion questions the law and universal rules and looks for optional explanations for good and evil. This is an ethical discussion. Politics in this order is not a technology based on procedures of confirmation as it is in the technocratic-efficient order, but on ethics—a metapragmatic situationist critical register, which enables reformist reality tests that question the orders of worth as such. Thus, I call this order ethico-civil; it is about situational good and evil and about engagement, participation, and redistribution. This is applied when the politicians talk about the citizens' "ability to take justice into their own hands, to do something which is not legal but legitimate" (Respondent 2). This applies to the cases when supporters discuss the difference between the public and private property and emphasize the public nature of the state, which cannot be led by private egoistic interests (Respondent 1). This discussion about good and evil might take a radical form of critique that emphasizes the situational nature of justice:

> Squatting … is, in the end, an illegal activity, but the motivation is justified. They point out that the state does not take care of its property… This is an activist attitude … motivated by a sense of good and evil. Every person has a right to point out evil.

And this is a radical form, occupation, that demonstrates that their system does not work. (Respondent 1)

According to the activists' supporters, Klinika passes the tests of the industrial and civic orders of worth —it is efficient and beneficial for the community even when it might appear not to be qualified by the rules and regulations. The question here therefore is not whether the worth is attached to Klinika or not, but how we attach the worth to the social actors and when it is possible to question particular tests formats. On the one hand, there are criticized official requirements of the civic order, and on the other, there are DIY tests that Klinika itself created and passed. The former are used as a means of domination, and the latter are used as a means of emancipation. Successful cooperation between activists and politicians happens when the activists' DIY tests and the existential tests are supported by the reformist tests coming from the institutional order.

Supporters use the opportunity to criticize the state as a manager, emphasizing that the activists cleaned and repaired the building by themselves and gathered public support. Descriptions in the local newspaper *Kauza3*, which is supportive of the case (with the exceptions of a few articles), usually put an accent on the large amount of work that the center has done, on the existing project and the activities taking place, while justifying it via the sympathies of the local community, supportive demonstrators, actions that demonstrate support and solidarity, and the thoughts and support of famous personalities.

Despite the fact that the supporters were trying to decriminalize squatting—the Green Party included it in the long-term political program—in the end, they publicly withdrew their support. Performativity of politics and public opinion played a role in this. The topic of squatting is too controversial and does not earn political points. Domination by agreement over the controversy is obvious here. As one local politician commented:

The idea was that we would be more successful if we did not evoke controversies. Our target is mainstream. … We did not want to focus on things that are controversial and lead to the fragmentation of society. Inside, we never change our supportive stands; this was a change in the method of communication. (Respondent 1)

As the politician continues, the ethical understanding of politics falls into a trap, a pragmatic political game which is about votes. The same argument refers to support for migrants, which is an ethically correct position, but a very risky one to support.

Whereas citizens are qualified to make urban interventions, developers, on the contrary, must be regulated, and municipalities must have a stronger say in the process of urban development. The request to have rules and regulations govern development is common of both orders; however, the ethico-civil order explicitly speaks about the regulations and limitations of the market (not about agreements between developers and the municipality in general). As a local politician, explaining his political program, saw it, he wanted to put the interests of the districts and the citizens ahead of those of the developers:

> The construction regulations… I wanted to modify them to a format that would be more in compliance with the interests of the districts and citizen participation in the decision-making process about these regulations. They had to make the developers' work harder and be more complicated—this was one of the things I was running on in the elections. (Respondent 6)

3.6.3 Local politics: Changes in public debates

There are several changes which can be seen in municipal politics when compared to the 1990s, including several problematic aspects. Urban politics from the 1990s onwards was characterized above as a neoliberal urban order (or even, a neoliberal shock doctrine in urban management), where urban space has served merely the goals of the market—it is commodified, privatized, rents are deregulated, leading to advancing prices in real estate and gentrification (Pixová 2012), and, in turn, the financialization of housing we are witnessing today. Nowadays we can see how municipal politicians are trying to deal with the politics of the last thirty years. To put it in the words on the name of this thesis—cities are waking up from a totality where nothing other than the neoliberal imagination of urban space exists. However, after a slow awakening, they are realizing that they have to have the means to make politics.

This final section of the empirical part summarizes the main changes emphasized by the interviewees. First, I will speak about the change in the nature of debate, then about the overwhelming complexity of debate and a critique of the informational-bureaucratic domination. I will then finish the empirical analysis with the notions of weak municipalities and domination by agreement.

Towards a civilized debate

First of all, politicians who have experience working in municipalities have noted a change in the nature of the disputes about urban space. Here, it is worth returning to research of the disputes from the 1990s (Horák 2007). In his research, Martin Horák speaks about the technocracy of civil servants and the delegitimization of activists, which led to a closedness and a limitation of debate. Other research detects neither mechanisms nor a will to engage citizens with municipal planning processes (Pixová 2018, 2020) but does find municipalities to be sites of "local power abuse," where private interests and non-transparent power relationships are connected (Pixová 2018: 681).

And while the delegitimization of activists is still present, as was shown above, this tendency is not that certain anymore. It has become twofold: On the one hand, activists have become more professional and learned as regards the technocratic and legal language of urban management, which is a sign of depoliticization, activist professionalization, and their cooptation by the non-conflictual norms of local urban disputes. Importantly, this tendency contributes to the *cooptation debate*, as Císař calls it, by demonstrating that not just foreign donors but also local politicians influence changes toward the particular type of language and topics articulated by activists (Císař 2012). On the other hand, there is still a group of activists who are delegitimized. The former are those whose demands are negative (e.g., against development) and who do not use professional language—this is the case of ASC Klinika. First, I speak about the change in technocratic attitudes and then explore the attitudes towards the activists.

To start, according to the local politicians, civil servants became more open in their discussions with citizens. This is connected to the rising role of municipalities. As a local politician put it:

> The thing that has changed is that, after fifteen years, the departments of the state understood that big infrastructural constructions are not possible to push with force. There is a need to discuss it with the districts or the cities, and there is a need to publicly negotiate it. (Respondent 24)

This politician connects it with the declining role of the state in society. This notion supports the previous statements not just about the state acting in uncertain conditions, but also becoming itself uncertain, which leads to its dependency on public image and thus more openness to the public. The respondent continues:

> I think that it is connected to the declining role of the state. The state is not at all as strong as it was in the 1990s, during the transition from the Bolshevik regime when the state was everything and civil society was zero. At that time, the state was able to ignore civil society and do its business without limitations.

Another local politician connects this change to a general change in politics and the role of social networks, which again, increases pressure on performativity:

> It was a different time ten years ago when I started it. Today it is more open. The procedures are transparent. The political culture changed … because of the internet and better access to information—social networks. The style of politics has changed a lot. It is not like ten years ago, agreements behind closed doors. … An alternative that we proposed [as the Green Party on the district level] is an ideal of wider public participation, a more transparent decision-making process, an idea that politics is an actual public issue, not what is done by some elected politicians behind closed doors like ten, fifteen years ago. (Respondent 1)

Secondly, activists have more opportunities to engage in discussions about urban space today. However, politicians make a distinction between constructive activists and those who block projects. The first are not considered dogmatic—they do not have an ideology and are depoliticized—and are seen as seeking compromise and agreement. They "formulate their demands in a friendly manner, democratically and openly," where "democratically [means that they] do not base their demands on dogmas or fears" (Respondent 20). The second type are those who reject the compromise and do not want to participate in agreement. They reject the projects and are not considered to be legitimate partners in discussion: "This I see as an essential problem because you can talk only to those who are willing to make an agreement" (Respondent 24). Through these negative stances, they "decrease their power to make change" (Respondent 20). Respondents claim that the negative stances are one of the reasons why the activists are not taken seriously in urban disputes. Moreover, they claim that through such stances, they will

only prolong the construction but will not bring about any essential change. This distinction emphasizes the technocratic and normalizing nature of debate and domination by agreement (see below), which is presented as a universal value. But the universal value of agreement does not exist in the pragmatic world, and pragmatic sociology helps to demonstrate that what is presented as universal is situational and defined by an unequal power redistribution (domination) between the actors who participate in this situation—situational here does not mean relative or contextual, but refers to a situation as a typified and typifiable moral order that provides a key to understanding appropriate action. In this sense, the existence of agreement based on equality of participation is highly problematic. Moreover, it emphasizes the professionalization of debates about urban space and the extraction of ideology, which means the exclusion of those who do not have mastery of this language or those who decided to use the political language of conflicts (incl. class struggle) and direct actions.

Generally, returning to the historical development described at the beginning of this thesis, one must emphasize the importance of the tendency to repress radical activism (by applying rules to the debate, different types of domination, or, in some cases, police violence) in a context where moderate urban initiatives are growing. Revisiting the points emphasized above, local civic initiatives are on the rise which, in general, present a more acceptable, deradicalized critique associated with an ideal of democratic participation rather than direct confrontation of the order in its wholeness instead of its parts. They are moreover *local*, attached to a locality, as opposed to autonomous and anarchist movements that always contain global and international visions of politics. In this way, they propose a local solution. This raises a question as to the development of a systemic critique implemented inside this capitalist order which perhaps serves to consolidate the order itself—a question that is beyond this thesis (Boltanski 2011).

Overwhelming complexity of public debates about urban space

The turn towards a more open debate discussed above brings a further obstacle to the urban disputes. They become so complex and include so many different actors that reaching any kind of agreement seems impossible. Coming back to the topic of uncertainty, this is the situation which Boltanski describes as lacking institutions, when every statement is considered to be an opinion and there is no rule (institutions) which could decide which statement is valid, correct, or last. Indeed, some of the respondents claimed exactly that, that there is a lacking arbiter in

urban disputes which can solve and stop the endless exchange of opinions, remarks, critiques, as so forth. The question is whether this arbiter must be a law, a public municipality that represents local citizens, or a developer who wants to build.

The question that follows is how to bring the citizens into the urban space debate given that it is so complex. In this regard, the respondents emphasized the role of politicians in this process. They must explain to citizens the meaningful possibilities for participation and make it possible:

> People have their lives, and it is hard for them to orient in the [urban] environment: how a town hall works, what the possibilities for intervention are, what a local government is, what a state department is, what the difference between the Prague government and the district government is, what the possibilities are to find information. A layperson who does not study this at night has to change to understand these things. This makes the public weak in its ability to influence public space, and the public space becomes a bureaucratic and professional thing. This comes out of the complexity of the world. … On the other hand, politicians and public authorities must take care of this system, so that in all its complexity, which is given, it is transparent, and the possibilities for participation are the best. This is the politicians' responsibility. (Respondent 1)

Besides an arbiter, there is a further possible solution to the complexity—exclusion. This was implemented by the Czech government in the newly proposed construction law, which simply excluded some entities from the debates to make them faster. The new Czech construction law, issued in 2021 mainly by Babiš-led governing coalition, was criticized for its undemocratic nature as it deprived some actors (NGOs, neighbors, etc.) from a position in the discussion and centralized the power over urban space into the hands of the state (Svoboda 2020). In general, the democratic need for inclusion and the need to efficiently build seem to be in a contradiction that leads to a "paralysis of the system," in the words of one respondent, and which is not possible to overcome:

> Imagine, there is a Prague bypass. And there are ten districts, meaning ten representative organs with whom you need to agree. And then ten civil society organizations will come … and then fifty people who want to participate. In that

moment you have tens or hundreds of participating entities in the construction, …
dealing with all the objections will take months or years (Respondent 24).

Fighting complexity and the critique of informational-bureaucratic domination

Generally, the politicians of this study described the current state of urban space debates as full of "foul tricks, mistakes, and misunderstandings … which is thanks to the legal environment" (Respondent 20). By "legal environment," this and other respondents mean the absence of rules or an arbiter in public disputes about urban space that can make a final decision. In this way, urban disputes are very unpredictable, moves are unknown, and power is unequally distributed (especially, between local governments and developers). Politicians claim this to be a legacy of the 1990s, when no rules for cooperation for working with urban space had been created and too much emphasis was put on the private sector.

Complexity and informational-bureaucratic domination cause disenchantment among different types of actors. First, in compliance with pragmatic sociology's view that ordinary actors are critical, it is important to emphasize that the interviewees with whom I spoke in the course of the data collection understand this type of domination and are critical of it, just as are sociologists. One politician explained how this type of domination allegedly was used in the Klinika case:

I think what happened, but I don't have evidence of it, was that the head of the Prague 3 district or somebody from the council asked at the construction department whether it is possible to give Klinika a fine, just asked, "Are there any possibilities to give them a fine?" So, they created this [building approval certificate that did not exist]. (Respondent 1)

The politician went on to explain how this move is a political move used by the dominant forces because of the selectivity of its application. For example, in the case of AirBnB, when a flat that has a certificate for housing is used for a business, construction departments do not work in this way. Despite the flats' use being in conflict with their building certificates and other norms and laws (e.g., trade law), local construction departments do not sanction or even check (until very recently following the activities of the Bearable Living in the City Center of Prague citizens' initiative (see Snesitelné bydlení n.d.)

A politician from a right-wing liberal conservative party who used to be an activist describes his experience with this type of domination. In this case, the closed political opportunity structure and its refusal to provide information is what led him to politics:

> My activist experience is that we were trying through all possible legal means to put pressure on the establishment present at that time, so they would provide us information. … We were writing articles, we were going to assemblies. … then we knew that apparently our district would not get any profit [from the construction of the Prague bypass]. … This construction will influence our environment and us for a very long time… and future generations. … We wanted to get some compensation, and it was not only about money. … there was no debate about it. A debate about this topic in any form was missing. (Respondent 24)

Weak municipalities

Whereas, on the one hand, the dispute about urban terrain seems to be very complex, on the other hand, there is little power in the hands of municipalities. As described above, the democratic mechanisms for negotiating with developers and investors are still not developed on the municipal level (e.g., public-private partnerships). In the first fifteen years after the transformation, urban planning was seen as contradictory to the market, and preference was given to clientelism and ad-hoc decisions instead of a long-term strategy (Jacobsson 2015; Sýkora and Bouzarovski 2012; Temelová 2009). Today, first, there are still few possibilities at the disposal of municipalities—the land use plan which is its single weapon can be easily changed, and developers use this opinion often. According to the respondents, the developers buy cheap land which is not supposed to be for construction according to the plan and change it to land for construction, which is more expensive. The position between the municipality and development in not equal, as one of the respondents claimed, "I would try to implement rules that would at least balance, not even give more power to the municipality but at least somehow balance the power between developers and the city" (Respondent 6).

Secondly, these rules of cooperation between the private and public sector have only recently been created, and "it will take a very long time before the cities become competitive [in terms of private and public forces]" (Respondent 20). One of the emphasized methods is developers'

contributions, which became a matter of debate in 2020, thirty years after developers were given unregulated influence over the urban terrain. However, to put pressure on developers is not so easy; in the Czech context, the word "regulation" is not welcome nor are attempts to make regulatory policies—the author of these policies are often condemned and connected to the communist past (Respondent 6).

This weakness of municipalities, among other things, is thanks to their previous privatization of property. To put it in the words of one local politician, the power to influence urban politics in capitalism is found in property: "Vienna has an advantage in that it owns the land, so it also has much more influence than Prague. I think that in Amsterdam this is also the case. I am right-wing, you know, I believe in property" (Respondent 21). This, as already mentioned, makes politics dependent on property that is itself a limiting factor, especially under the current conditions of propertyless municipalities.

Domination by agreement

The last important notion is domination by agreement, which is often articulated in municipal politics. As pointed out above, an agreement presupposes a particular language that actors must master in order to have legitimacy in urban space disputes. Among NGOs, there are both ideologically dogmatic actors who push their values and constructive professionals—the former are illegitimate, the latter, welcomed. This vision of an agreement excludes particular types of actors. Moreover, in general, it excludes a conflictual political discussion which, in the logic of agreement, presents an obstacle. Topics that are essentially conflictual (e.g., class struggle) are impossible to articulate. A critique of capitalism and capital under these conditions also becomes impossible because it is not constructive and does not lead to agreement. Controversial political topics scare politicians because they can end their careers: "Nobody was courageous enough to protect the [Klinika] project. This, I think is the main reason why it did not come up for discussion in the Prague city hall—everybody was afraid that it would end their political career" (Respondent 7). Conflict with developers scares politicians in the same manner. This is one of the reasons why the land use plan can be changed so easily upon their request (Respondent 6). Depoliticized technical language is thus considered a condition of agreement. It is worth noting that this agreement is made under the conditions described above: a weak municipality, delegitimized activists, and strong developers. What an agreement looks like under these conditions, one can easily guess.

4. Conclusion

In this PhD thesis, I described an urban dispute between civil servants, municipal politicians, and the autonomous movement as it regards the Autonomous Social Center Klinika. This concluding part is organized into six statements which I consider to be the most contributive to social movements studies and the understanding of today's neoliberal urban order in general.

1.   In the neoliberal urban order, contradictions inside an institutional order might be used as tactics by social movements. Thus, autonomy has a symbiotic relationship with hegemony, as does critique and an institutional order. This relationship also implies risks—the movement's tactics cannot be dependent solely on the dynamic and uncertain institutional contradictions. To understand one, sociology must consider the other. This symmetrical approach is one of the major benefits of the pragmatic sociology of critique, contrary to social movement studies, the analysis of prefigurative politics, and urban movement studies.

In the thesis, I have demonstrated that social movements studies benefit from a symmetrical approach that analyzes both the movements and the contradictions inside an institutional order. What is more, these contradictions are used pragmatically by the movements and give them opportunities to act—this challenges the relationship between "autonomy" and "hegemony" as is described, for example, by Richard Day. Autonomy, in this case, takes opportunities from contradictions in the hegemonic order and its inability to be "total" in Boltanski's sense. In comparison to social movement studies, the analysis of prefigurative politics, and urban movement studies, as was described in the theoretical part of the thesis, PSC sees social actors as uncertain and fragile, including those that represent the political opportunity structure or hegemonic order. Thus, rather than a structure, one may speak about arenas and actors bound by internal contradictions and a plurality of logics. Arenas, as they appear in this research, are identified through the actors that create them (the institutional bureaucratic arena; the political arena, where politics is understood in the Rancièrian sense; and the arena of institutional municipal politics) and by language (the legal arena). The fragility of an institutional order (bureaucracy) lies in internal contradiction: on the one hand, there is public pressure towards rational mastery and more efficiency, and, on the other, there are complex bureaucratic norms that must be followed. The neoliberalization of the state in these circumstances is an interpretation of the efficiency requested by society in terms of an easy and fast bureaucracy, implying that state become a service rather than a public body or sovereign. It is a reaction to

the critique of "lazy and slow bureaucrats" that is perceived by civil servants themselves and which causes their disenchantment. In this manner, and in line with Boltanski's and Chiapello's thought, one can see how capitalist neoliberal logic intervenes with state structures in a reaction to critique and creates new types of justification for the public that is based on PR, the performance of efficiency, and hiding "conceptual work." Institutional change happens in the process of introducing a new set of tests (from the market and industrial orders of worth): profit, transferred buildings, extraordinary savings, and income streams are all tests that the state passes in order to prove its efficiency to the public. Klinika, on the other hand, was critical not only of the efficiency of the state but of its public nature—a critique which did not find legal ground—public and private property are of same nature, stated the court. It articulated a critique that requires rethinking the state, moving from the state as an (industrial) efficient societal machine to an (civic) organ open to citizen intervention – from a service to a public body.

Klinika was possible because of the internal contradictions inside the bureaucracy: there is a requirement of efficiency, but also, contrarywise, there is a fixedness of material space in the networks of bureaucratic complexity that do not allow for space to be transferred. The former is a reason why publicly owned abandoned property exists. Even in the harshest neoliberal state, institutions cannot grasp the reality fully; there will be always temporary abandoned elements (legal loopholes, unclear ownership, etc.) where temporary autonomous zones may appear. This internal contradiction is used as an element in the movements' tactics (e.g., the occupation of publicly owned abandoned buildings). The movement's tactics stem directly from the contradictions in the hegemonic order and make practical use of them, not only in terms of using abandoned property but also in terms of applied test formats (efficiency, good price). The same applies to the contradictions inside the municipal politics (a conflict between technocratic-efficient and ethico-civil orders) which were used pragmatically by the activists.

Importantly, I would like to emphasize that the above-described process is framed by the neoliberal urban order in capitalist cities. As was already pointed out in the introduction and throughout the thesis, urban space in cities presents one of the most profitable assets in capitalism. Capitalism seeks consolidation—this is obvious from the descriptions of urban developments in the Czech Republic (Chapter 1). This means that it seeks totality, that is, naming, signifying, and valorizing all space and all property in compliance with the logic of neoliberalization. During this process it always collides with the internal contradictions of institutions—here, I mean institutions in general, including those of the state and economic system, which implies that capitalism as an institutional order also collides with its own

contradictions. Operating with these contradictions is a sophisticated business: the capitalism consolidated in cities leaves very limited space for the political maneuvering of movements. This is especially true in the post-socialist states where neoliberalization took the shock doctrine form. The risk in this dynamic is that under circumstances of consolidated capitalism, the number of contradictions is limited and tends towards zero due to the inherent tendency of institutions to cover all aspects of the world. Any tactic that relies on these contradictions is thus problematic because it is based on dynamic, unpredictable, and unclear circumstances provided by an outside environment, which, moreover, tend to be few in number. Furthermore, the capitalist system itself makes enormous use of its own contradictions (see, e.g., *The New Spirit of Capitalism* or the continuing financialization after the global economic crisis).

2.   Urban neoliberalization is a tendency that cannot be characterized by a singular homogeneous logic. The municipal arena is a battlefield for the neoliberal imagination about urban space and its critique. To study both, one must question who is qualified to participate in urban space creation and under which conditions. The critique of neoliberal tendencies inside the municipal arena demonstrates the weaknesses and trigger zones of technocratic-efficient thinking that supports the developers' domination and free market transcendence. Importantly, these weaknesses have an organizational nature.

As I have shown in the empirical part, municipal politics is not as pragmatic as previous research claims (e.g., Russell 2019). During political events such as Klinika one can obviously see different conflictual logics present in this arena. One is technocratic-efficient and essentially neoliberal because it gives freedom to developers and puts limitations on the civil sphere. It seeks to grasp the world of experience and put it into particular categories and forms through use of qualified objects coming from the civic order (rules, regulations, etc.). The form of civil sphere that this politics creates is the NGO. It is predictable, depoliticized, and deprived of a conflictual radical critique that could put the system as a whole to an existential test, applying reformist test formats instead. As was already demonstrated in previous research, NGOs articulate an artistic critique and liberal values rather than substantial change to the economic system (social critique; Navrátil 2013). Returning then to the words of the interviewees, NGOs are not expected to be political, and conflictual topics such as class struggle cannot be articulated. As a form, the NGO does not allow for mass participation, which has always been a weapon of the Left (e.g., strikes that can stop factories and open a path for negotiations) against actors who have more financial resources. The transactional nature of the civil sphere

based on weak organizational ties is, in this sense, an outcome of the institutional order's quest to grasp the world and convert it into reality.

On the other hand, there is an ethico-civil order that does not seek to place the civil sphere into categories, leaving the space to the world, in Boltanski's sense. Importantly, it articulates a critique of the technocratic-efficient thinking that is based on *organizational forms*—these are not NGOs that participate in civil society but any citizen involved in an organization of undefined form. Such an organizational critique obscures reality because it presupposes a mixture of various types of politics and organizational forms as well as unexpected alliances. It supports the ability of social actors to create tests themselves (as Klinika did by proving its worth in the civic order) whereby they acquire semantic power (over the tests formats). And while being based on reformist reality tests, this critique, embedded in an institutional order, challenges the technocratic-efficient order seeking clarity and definitions. To come back again to the words of a politician from a liberal conservative party who denounced the overwhelming power of the civil actors: "Civil society will start to rule all of us … which will lead to the total destruction of the whole system" (Respondent 24).

3. Revolutionary thinking must reflect a spatial turn. Western social urban movements exist in the spaces of neoliberal cities, and this spatiality must be considered. The revolutionary imagination is not only about temporality but also about spatiality. Prefiguration is not just temporal but a spatial category.

In the empirical part of the thesis, I emphasized that space has three different meanings based on the formats of engagement with reality for a social movement. On the level of public justification, activists seek to legitimize themselves as well as criticize the poor urban management of the state. On the strategic level, the space of the social center is important for the organization of new cores and mobilization. Finally, on the level of engagement with familiarity, prefigurative politics based on affinity happens. I elaborated on the temporality of prefiguration in the theoretical chapter but, to summarize it here, prefiguration is based on a non-linear understanding of future and on bringing bits of the future into the present. It is a politics of the here and now, embedded in everyday life and the activists' physical closeness. This temporality is connected to the spaces that autonomous movements are able to acquire in Western capitalist cities. These spaces, often abandoned by an institutional order, are always temporal; they exist in the here and now just like the future in prefiguration. I consider this temporality of space prerequisite for the temporality of prefiguration. I moreover consider

spatiality as being definitive to autonomy in general: autonomy is possible only in the framework of the space where it happens. This is a similarity between Western autonomous movements and those such as the Zapatista or Kurdish movements. Autonomy as a value cannot be practiced without a space—at its core, there is a struggle for land. But, in comparison with the mentioned movements, autonomy in Prague is and always has been temporal—there have been no long-lasting projects (that we can find, e.g., in Poland).

4. The rules of the public disputes change over the time. In the case of post-socialist neoliberal Prague, it is possible to see the change from the 1990s when civic actors were delegitimized and the debates were technocratic. Today's debate has brought higher inclusivity for some and exclusivity for others; thus, we refer to changes in the nature of the debates rather than their higher inclusivity or democratization.

Just like the state bureaucracy did, municipal politics reacted to critique. It was criticized for being non-inclusive, technocratic, and delegitimizing (of activists), and it indeed changed towards more inclusivity. This is what I called a turn towards "a civilized debate." Some of the civil actors are in fact now included and legitimized in public debates about urban space. However, inclusion of some has brought the exclusion of others. First, this is exclusion due to the language that must be used. To be sure, citizens can be involved in the disputes, but they must master the technocratic and complex language. Second, a general critique of the order is not allowed—activists who try to condemn capitalism are perceived as ideological and dogmatic, both of which do not belong to the (apparently) technical disputes about urban space. Disputes of this kind become depoliticized, preventing any articulation of a possibility of change. Moreover, domination by agreement in this arena does not allow for any systemic critique and, therefore, any systemic change—this critique and its demands for change are always conflictual. As in the case of the state, municipal politics digested a critique present in society and produced new rules of participation in the urban space debate, but they are both inclusive and exclusive. Thus, we cannot speak about democratization or plurality but about change based on two contradictory procedures of inclusion/exclusion.

5. Epistemology that is attentive to actors and actions as well as regimes of engagement demonstrates that radical movements could be reformist or dominant. Radicality, reformism, critique, and domination are situational and, as such, could also be attached to all social actors. It is not only the nature and rules of the public disputes that can change but also the tactics of domination.

Pragmatic sociology is attentive to actor and action, and it endows both social movements and an institutional order with agency. Instead of being related to Bourdieusian habitus, the behavior of social actors is understood as situational. For research on social movements, an institutional order, and critique, this means there are no qualities attached to the social actors. Thus, radical movements do not have a radical identity at all. Radicality is rather attached to a particular type of engagement (engagement with radical familiarity) or to particular types of tests coming from the world (existential tests in comparison to reality tests). As I have demonstrated, movements that are called radical might also use reformist tactics to legitimize themselves in the eyes of the public. In such a manner, Klinika imposed tests of civility, efficiency, and cost onto itself while also forcing reformist tests of efficiency, cost, and publicity onto the state bureaucracy.

As for the institutional order, it is a dominant actor in society in a semantic and symbolic sense and with regard to a monopoly on violence. In this thesis, I explore new tactics of domination used by the order: domination by relocation and informational-bureaucratic domination as well as the ability to apply legal intimidation and economic repression. However, domination in general is not attached only to the institutions. As I have shown in the empirical part, activists can also be dominant in some arenas. In this regard, I spoke about both domination through the relocation of dispute to the political arena and domination in the political arena. Whereas civil servants and politicians have control over the legal language of the urban space debate and dealing with predictable legal subjectivities (NGOs), the political arena is based on radically conflictual language as well as the politics of the streets, which institutional actors do not and perhaps cannot master. This is due to the fact that civil servants are supposed to do depoliticized work, and municipal politicians are bound by the logic of agreement, which excludes "dogmatic" ideological conflicts.

What is important here to emphasize with regard to the multiplicity of arenas and situations is the fact that with the transfer of actions from one arena to another, not only do the situational qualities of the actors change (e.g., radicality/reformism) but also the modes of domination, repression, and resistance. Klinika passed the tests of civility and entered a bureaucratic and legal field of disputes where the above-described tactics of domination are applied. The tactics of resistance in these fields are different from resistance to police. Resistance becomes very problematic for movement in this context because informational-bureaucratic domination, legal intimidation, and economic repression are individualizing and preclude collective action.

6. The neoliberal order is a totality in the sense that it does not enable action. Here, I departure from PSC which would state that an order based on compromises and that is affected by contradictions cannot be total. Instead, I base this notion on the respondents' experiences and my own experience with activism in the urban terrain.

I would like to finish this thesis from the position of an activist, not a PhD candidate. I find it necessary given the reasons I stated in chapter 3.1. Here, I would like to return to the name of this thesis and explain why I call today's order a totality despite the fact that it is full of contradictions, critique, and instability.

Boltanski argued that the above-described contradictions and compromises between orders of worth inside an institutional order make totality impossible. And this might be correct on a semantic level. However, in my research, I knew that the uncertain nature of institutions does not reinforce an ability to meaningfully act (albeit, it may provide some opportunities for action).

Politicians in local governments understand some of the consequences of neoliberal urbanism and make modest and insufficient attempts to fix its negative outcomes (e.g., they try to strengthen a municipality's position). However, they do not have either the know-how or the power to make this change. Firstly, they do not have property (prerequisite for having power in capitalism) because of privatization, which still continues. Secondly, they do not have enough will to strengthen their position—manuals for developers' contributions are being issued only now, they are not compulsory, and they serve no other goal but to boost the developers' image. The politicians are in general unable to perceive a serious critique of their position and are guided by a consensus in which one part (developers) has enormous power at the expense of that of other actors. New, radical anti-capitalist ideas and imaginations, essential for sustainable urban development in the context of the current climate and housing crises, are barely being heard by politicians because they reject the main mantras of today: free market logic, private property, and growth. Thus, they continue to be dismissed as ideological or dogmatic. Finally, as was already stated in previous research, the only means to protect municipal politics—urban planning—is subject to constant change as per the developers' will (e.g., more than two thousand changes to the 2013 land-use plan (Pixová 2020: 42)). Given these conditions, local politics falls under the management of developers—it does not have the necessary political autonomy to act (for more about this lack of autonomy under post-socialist capitalism, see

Bandelj 2016). The fact that there is critique inside this order does not change these systematic conditions, conditions in which the critical actors find themselves as well.

Guided by the logic of neoliberalism, the state sells all its unnecessary property at the highest possible price, *performing* an efficient state bureaucracy through use of marketing and PR instead of doing conceptual work. The functioning of the state thus becomes a performance issued in reaction to the critique of bureaucracy present in society in which urban space plays a role as proof of efficiency (which is very easy to do because of its high price). The public nature of state property is abandoned. Public property that could serve the citizens' needs is guided by neoliberal logic instead. It is worth noting here that many progressive ideas depend specifically on public property, for example, using public abandoned buildings for housing is defined as a public interest, which the logic of housing for degrowth suggests.

Finally, activists, as I demonstrated in the thesis, are repressed by different tactics of domination which institutional actors apply when they cannot use police force. The autonomy of actors moreover grows in spaces abandoned by the state or capital, and these spaces are often temporal due to the tendency of the institutional order to grasp all the elements of reality. In capitalist cities, these spaces exist only in the here and now, and the politics that the movement have chosen (prefiguration) suits this temporality through perplexing operations on the horizon of expectation and hope.

Given these conditions, there is a very small chance to free cities from the siege of capitalism. When looking at what has been built in Prague and other global cities today, one can definitely state that we have invented cities in which it is possible to build for the purpose of the market, to financialize and commodify space, and to valorize property. It is not possible however to create with the intention of fulfilling the human need for housing, social reproduction, or joy in urban life. However, I would like to stress here that the critique inside local municipalities, the understanding among politicians of their political weaknesses, and the existential tests of reality coming from radical politics, which together create ambiguity and incompleteness in the dominant logics, are potential signs of an awaking. Thus, after thirty years of accelerated urban neoliberalization, perhaps it is time to take a pause.

Appendix

Interview 1	38 yo, male, municipal politician, Green party
Interview 2	40 yo, female, municipal politician, Green party
Interview 3	23 yo, female, activist
Interview 4	19 yo, female, activist
Interview 5	30 yo, male, activist
Interview 6	37 yo, male, municipal politician, Green party
Interview 7	23 yo, male, municipal politician and activist
Interview 8	33 yo, activist
Interview 9	40 yo, female, civil servant, ÚZSVM (Office for government representation in the property affairs)
Interview 10	39 yo, male, civil servant, ÚZSVM (Office for government representation in the property affairs)
Interview 11	35 yo, male, civil servant, ÚZSVM (Office for government representation in the property affairs)
Interview 12	Civil servant; respondent refused to provide any information
Interview 13	40 yo, male, civil servant, ÚZSVM (Office for government representation in the property affairs)
Interview 14	31 yo, female, activist
Interview 15	32 yo, female, activist
Interview 16	55 yo, male, civil servant, Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic
Interview 17	29 yo, female, activist
Interview 18	28 yo, female, activist
Interview 19	42 yo, male, civil servant, Ministry of regional development
INTERVIEW 20	60 yo, male, municipal politician, TOP09
Interview 21	54 yo, male, municipal politician, TOP09
Interview 22	43 yo, male, municipal politician, ODS
Interview 23	53 yo, male, municipal politician, Praha sobě

Interview 24	40 yo, male, municipal politician, ODS
Interview 25	Kateřína Arajmu, ÚZSVM (Office for government representation in the property affairs), published on a2larm

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